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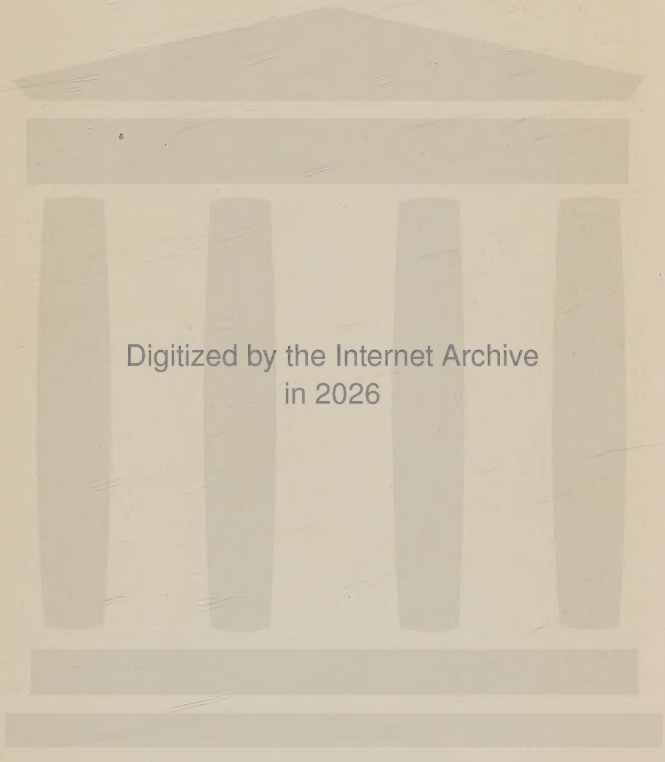
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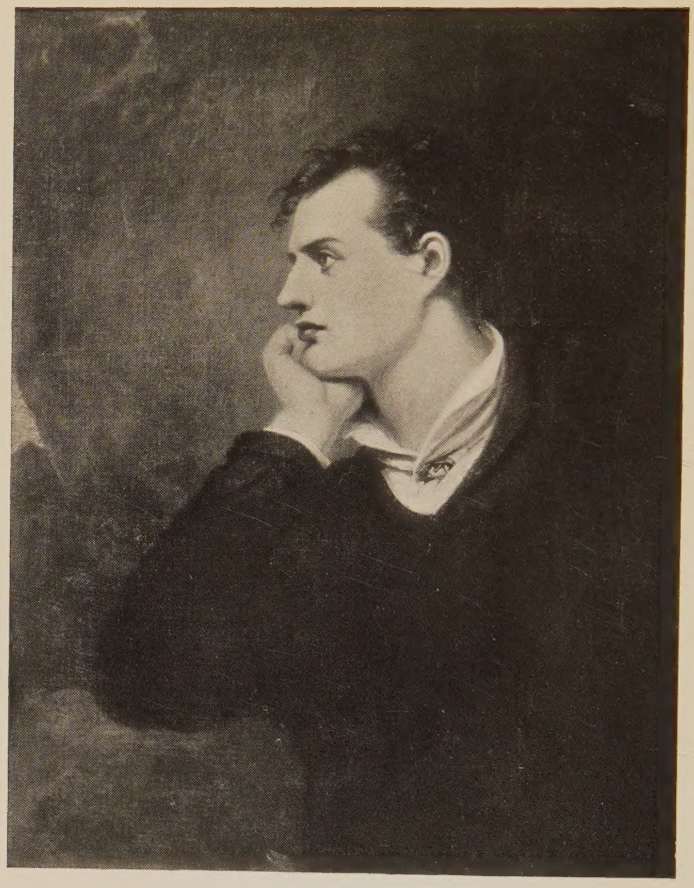


LORD BYRON

From a picture by R. Westall, R.A.,
in the possession of the late Baroness Burdett Coutts

LORD BYRON'S CORRESPONDENCE

CHIEFLY WITH

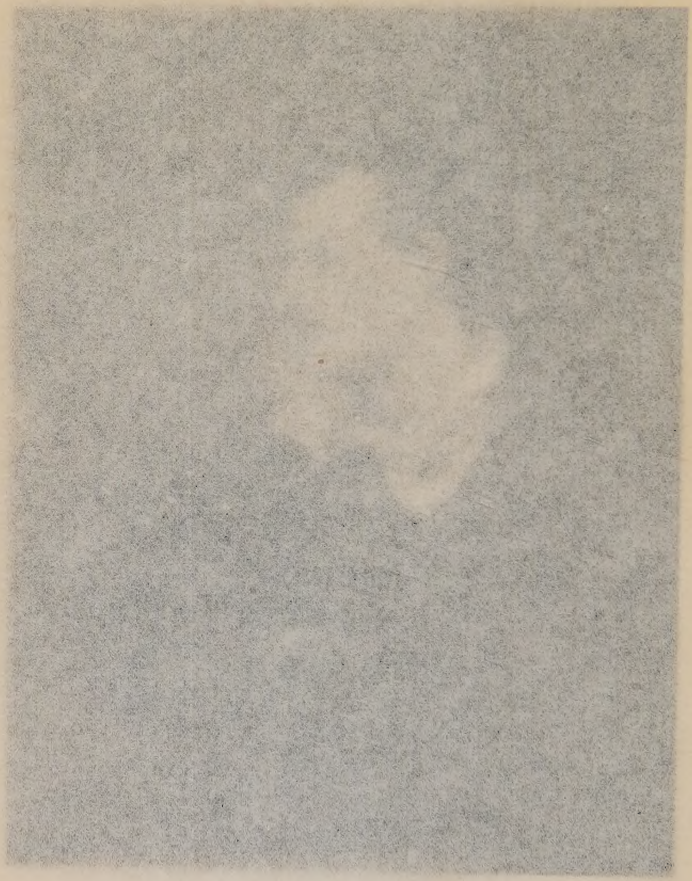
LADY MELBOURNE, MR. HOBHOUSE,
THE HON. DOUGLAS KINNAIRD, AND
P. B. SHELLEY

WITH PORTRAITS

EDITED BY JOHN MURRAY

IN TWO VOLUMES
VOL. I

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1922



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INTRODUCTION

THE letters contained in this volume have had a rather remarkable history. They were the property of Lord Broughton, better known as John Cam Hobhouse, the intimate friend and executor of Lord Byron, and through him came into the possession of his daughter, Lady Dorchester.

Lady Dorchester was an old friend of my father, and I made her acquaintance in 1876 or 1877. From that time onwards I was in very frequent communication with her about these papers, and she contemplated editing and publishing a selection of them; but there were many difficulties in the way, and she died in 1914 without carrying out her purpose.

In 1877 Lady Dorchester expressed a wish to have copies made, but was unwilling to entrust the letters to a stranger. I therefore undertook to do this myself, and had copied some 300, when my marriage and a journey abroad forced me to hand over the completion of the task to another copyist, who has since died. The copies were all returned to Lady Dorchester.

A few years later Lady Dorchester caused all these copies to be set up in type, and one or two proofs were struck off for her private use. I never read any of the letters again till after her death in 1914, and neither Mr. Prothero (Lord Ernle) nor Mr. Coleridge had access to them during the preparation of my edition of Byron, nor was any use made of any of Lady Dorchester's papers for the purpose of that work, the publication of which began in 1898, and ended in 1904.

I believe it was her original intention to leave all the papers to the late Lord Lovelace, until the publication

of *Astarte*, a book of which she strongly disapproved, caused her to change her mind in this respect, and his death in 1906 removed the possibility of any reversion to her intention even if she ever contemplated it.

In her later years she spoke to me many times about the disposal of these papers after her death, and at length told me she had decided to leave them to Lord Rosebery, a decision which I did everything in my power to confirm.

The last time I saw her she spoke of this destination as a settled matter.

A week or two after Lady Dorchester's death I met Lord Rosebery at dinner, and learned from him, to my amazement, that by a codicil to her will she had left the papers to me. Such an idea had never been even mentioned in the course of all our communications, and I told Lord Rosebery that I was very sorry to hear of the bequest, as I regarded him as far better qualified to deal with the trust than I was.

For a trust, and a very responsible trust it is. I think I know what Lady Dorchester's wishes and intentions were; and the views in regard to Lord Byron's memory and reputation, and also in regard to his descendants, which have always been held by my Grandfather, my Father, and myself, added greatly to the difficulties of my position.

Our endeavour has always been to deal with Byron's works from their literary side, and to avoid as much as possible taking any part in the squalid and unsavoury discussions of his private life and personal delinquencies, which arose after Mrs. Beecher Stowe's disclosures in 1869.

In pursuance of this line of action I planned and—with the assistance of Mr. Rowland Prothero (now Lord Ernle) and the late Mr. Ernest Hartley Coleridge—

carried out the long-contemplated complete edition of Lord Byron's works.

At the outset we had the approval, and for a time the co-operation, of the late Lord Lovelace, and to this day I do not know what was the cause of his sudden perversion from friendship into bitter animosity. This is not the place in which to reopen that strange and unpleasant controversy, and, moreover, I have already dealt with it fully, and I believe conclusively, in an article in the *Monthly Review* for February 1906. It only remains for me to say that the account of the transaction given in Lady Lovelace's memoir of her husband contains several serious inaccuracies which I should have been willing to correct if an opportunity had been afforded me.

To return to my edition of Byron's works. The admirable notes of the two editors contain a vast amount of information, which cannot be found elsewhere, concerning Byron's life and writings. In pursuance of our original plan, it has not always been dragged forth and exhibited to the man in the street, but it is there for the expert and the student to discover, and many have discovered it.

Lady Dorchester's documents were handed over to me in the latter part of 1914, and at the outset I was met by a fresh difficulty. By a strange legal descent, and a series of surviving trustees, the copyright in all Lord Byron's unpublished works, which by his will was left away from his direct descendants, has passed into the hands of a gentleman who is in no way connected with Byron or any member of his family direct or collateral.

The investigations and negotiations incident to his protection as trustee, and mine as purchaser, in assigning the right of publication have occupied nearly seven years.

Lady Dorchester's collection comprised some 500 letters from Lord Byron, chiefly to Hobhouse, Kinnaird, and Lady Melbourne. By far the larger part of those to Kinnaird, who was his trustee, are worthless from an historical or literary point of view. They consist of constantly repeated inquiries and instructions about the sale of Newstead, investment of funds and other matters of no conceivable interest to anyone now.

A good many of the letters to Hobhouse have been omitted for similar reasons, but the omissions include nothing of importance.

The letters to Lady Melbourne, sister of Sir Ralph Noel (and consequently aunt of Lady Byron) and mother-in-law of Lady Caroline Lamb, form a complete series. It would have been my inclination to omit some of these letters—or some parts of them—as containing rather wearisome iterations of the same theme, but as Lord Byron's descendants have expressed a definite wish that they should be published *verbatim et literatim*, I have acquiesced in this course, and I never contemplated omitting anything of importance in them.

I have already mentioned that there was one packet of the letters which I did not copy myself, and my recollection of those I had copied was very indistinct, as, when they came into my possession in 1914, I had not read them for thirty-six years. Knowing as I did that every letter was copied and sent to the printer, I had worked on the printed copies exclusively until July 1921, but always with the intention of collating and verifying with the originals the copies I had not myself made.

This I did in June–July 1921, and then discovered that four letters were omitted from both the MS. copies and my set of the printed copies. I did not remove them, but they have now been restored.

Into the controversy raised and now revived by the two editions of *Astarte* I do not propose to enter here further than this :—Lord Lovelace apparently set out to prove two statements: (1) That Byron had guilty relations with Mrs. Leigh; and (2) that these were the cause of the separation.

Whatever opinion may be held in regard to (1), of which Lord Lovelace himself (then Lord Wentworth) emphatically denied the truth in a letter to the *Daily News* in 1869, and again by word of mouth and in writing in 1898, there has certainly been no proof of and no attempt to prove (2).[1] All the evidence contained in *Astarte* goes to show that Byron's alleged relations with his sister had nothing to do with the cause of separation.

I must record my sincere thanks to my friends Lord Ernle and Mr. Richard Edgcumbe for their kind and valuable assistance in preparing the proofs for press. Their knowledge of all that concerns Byron's life is unsurpassed by that of any other living men.

Lord Ernle has read the proofs, and Mr. Edgcumbe has also done this and supplied many notes and para-

[1] Those who are desirous of pursuing their inquiries into this disagreeable subject should study carefully *Recollections of a Long Life*, by Lord Broughton (J. C. Hobhouse). In vol. ii they will read that, at the time of the separation, Byron's most intimate friends cross-examined him as to his own delinquencies and appealed to him in the most solemn manner to tell them everything. Byron was no coward, nor was he prone to conceal his own misdeeds. The deliberate judgment arrived at by his friends was that "Lord Byron had not been guilty of any enormity, and that the whole charge against him would amount merely to such offences as are more often committed than complained of, and however they might be to be regretted as subversive of matrimonial felicity, would not render him amenable to the laws of any court, whether of justice or equity" (vol. ii, pp. 283–4; see also Shelley's letter of 29 Sept. 1816).

This was not published till 1909, four years after the appearance of the first edition of *Astarte*. Lord Lovelace never saw it, and so far as I am aware it is not quoted in the second edition, but it is a most important piece of evidence which cannot be ignored.

graphs. I have marked the most important of these paragraphs with his initials, " R. E."

I have also to thank Sir John Shelley Rolls for his kindness in allowing me to publish the Shelley letters contained in these volumes.

There are some who maintain that Byron's day is past, and even deny that he is a great poet. I believe that I have better opportunities than most people of forming an opinion as to the position he held in the public estimation, and I can assure these detractors that their view is a false one, and can only proceed from ignorance or hasty generalization.

During the past thirty years some hundreds of people, most of them entire strangers to me, have asked and received permission to come and see my collection of MSS. and other Byroniana. Among the most eager admirers Americans take a prominent place, and before the war German experts have been here and spent many hours collating MSS., etc. I am often surprised to find how widespread are the interest in and knowledge of Byron and his writings. Moreover, his reputation as a letter writer is now equal to that which he has long enjoyed as a poet, and although perhaps none of the letters in these volumes surpass the best of those to my Grandfather and Moore which have already been published, they will bear comparison with any other letters in the English language.

This book does not profess to be a continuous record of Byron's life, and I have confined the editorial part to such brief introductions and notes as may enable an ordinary reader to follow the events and persons described with reasonable ease. Those who wish for fuller information will find many references to other works, especially to the *Letters and Poetry of Lord Byron*, edited by Lord Ernle and Mr. Coleridge.

January 1922. JOHN MURRAY.

CONTENTS

VOL. I

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	Travels in Greece and Turkey (1808–1811)	1
II.	Return to England (1811–1812) . .	41
III.	Correspondence with Lady Melbourne (1812)	70
IV.	Correspondence with Lady Melbourne (1813)	126
V.	Marriage (1814–1815)	220

ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. I

LORD BYRON . . . . . *Frontispiece*

From a picture by R. Westall, R.A., in the possession of the late Baroness Burdett Coutts.

FACING PAGE

VISCOUNTESS MELBOURNE AND HER ELDEST SON, PENISTON LAMB 154

After the picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

FACSIMILE OF FORGED LETTER BY LADY CAROLINE LAMB . . . pp. 130 & 131

LETTERS OF LORD BYRON

CHAPTER I

TRAVELS IN GREECE AND TURKEY

(1808–1811)

In October 1805 Lord Byron, then in his eighteenth year, went into residence at Trinity College, Cambridge. He has plainly described his feelings at that time:

"When I first went up to College it was a new and heavy-hearted scene for me. Firstly, I so much disliked leaving Harrow. Secondly, I wished to go to Oxford, and not to Cambridge. Thirdly, I was so completely alone in this new world, that it half broke my spirits. It was one of the deadliest and heaviest feelings of my life to feel that I was no longer a boy."

Byron at first was disinclined to form any new friendships; and his almost sole companion during his first year at Trinity was his Harrow School friend, Edward Noel Long.

"Long's friendship"—says Byron—"and a violent, though pure love and passion which held me at the same period, were the then romance of the most romantic period of my life." In this "violent, though pure love" we recognize Byron's attachment to Mary Chaworth, whose marriage had taken place only a few weeks previously.

The best account of Byron's friendships during his

first year at Cambridge is contained in his letter to Murray of 19 Nov. 1820.[1] In this he relates how he first made the acquaintance of C. S. Matthews in 1807, "by means of Hobhouse who after hating me for two years because I wore a white hat and a grey coat and rode a grey horse (as he said himself) took me into his good graces because I had written some poetry."

Byron to Hobhouse

DORANTS, *February 27th*, 1808.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I write to you to explain a foolish circumstance, which has arisen from some words uttered by me before Pearce and Brown, when I was devoured by chagrin, and almost insane with the fumes of, not "last night's punch," but that evening's wine.

In consequence of a misconception of something on my part, I mentioned an intention of withdrawing my name from the Whig Club[2]; this, I hear, has been broached, and perhaps in a moment of intoxication and passion such might be my idea, but *soberly* I have no such design, particularly as I could not abandon my principles, even if I renounced the Society with whom I have the honour to be united in sentiments which I never will disavow.

This I beg you will explain to the members as publicly as possible, but should this not be sufficient, and they think proper to erase my name, be it so: I only request that in this case they will recollect I shall become a *Tory* of *their own making*. I shall expect your answer on this point with some impatience.

As an author, I am cut to atoms by the E[dinburgh] Review; it is just out, and has completely demolished my little fabric of fame. This is rather scurvy treatment for a Whig Review, but politics and poetry are different things, and I am no adept in either. I therefore submit in silence.

[1] *Letters and Journals*, v. 121.

[2] At Cambridge, founded by Hobhouse.

Scrope Davies [1] is meandering about London, feeding upon leg-of-beef soup, and frequenting the British Forum; he has given up hazard, as also a considerable sum at the same time.

I do not write often, but I like to receive letters; when, therefore, you are disposed to philosophize, no one standeth more in need of precepts of all sorts than

Yours very truly, BYRON.

Early in November 1808 Byron formed a plan for a foreign tour. He hoped to visit Persia and parts of British India. Letters were written to the Rev. John Palmer Professor of Arabic at Cambridge, inquiring as to what things would be necessary for his voyage. He also applied for letters of introduction to the various Consuls, and to the Governors of Calcutta and Madras. In a letter to his Mother, Byron says: "If I do not travel now, I never shall, and all men should one day or other. I have at present no connections to keep me at home." [2]

Writing to his Mother from Falmouth on 22 June 1809 Byron says:

"I am about to sail in a few days. I have a German servant (who has been with Mr. Wilbraham in Persia . . . Robert [Rushton] and William [Fletcher]; they constitute my whole suite. . . . As to money matters, I am ruined—at least till Rochdale is sold; and if that does not turn out well, I shall enter into the Austrian or Russian service—perhaps the Turkish if I like their manners. The world is all before me, and I leave England without regret, and without a wish to revisit anything it contains, except *yourself*, and your present residence [Newstead]. . . . I ought to add the leaving

[1] Scrope Berdmore Davies (1783–1852), Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, in 1805. For fuller particulars see *Letters and Journals*, i. 165.

[2] *Letters and Journals*, i. 193.

Murray [1] to my few regrets, as his age perhaps will prevent my seeing him again. Robert [Rushton], I take with me. I like him, because, like myself, he seems a friendless animal." [2]

On the 2nd July, Byron, accompanied by John Cam Hobhouse and their servants, sailed from Falmouth in the Lisbon packet commanded by Captain Kidd. The sea passage occupied five days. On 16 July Byron writes to his friend Francis Hodgson from Lisbon: "I am very happy here, because I loves oranges, and talks bad Latin to the Monks, who understand it, as it is like their own. And I goes into society (with my pocket-pistols), and I swims in the Tagus all across at once, and I rides on an ass or a mule and swears Portuguese, and have got a diarrhœa, and bites from the mosquitoes. But what of that? Comfort must not be expected by folks that go a pleasuring." [3]

On the following day Byron and Hobhouse on horseback started to ride near 500 miles to Gibraltar, which place was reached on the 5th August, after a brief stay at Seville, and Cadiz, from which place they proceeded in the *Hyperion* frigate to Gibraltar. Byron states that they rode on excellent horses, which carried them seventy miles a day.

The passage from Gibraltar to Malta occupied fourteen days, the packet having touched both at Cagliari and Girgenti, at which place the mails were landed, and on the following day the vessel anchored at Malta. The Governor here provided Byron and his

[1] Joe Murray had been for many years in the service of the "wicked" Lord Byron. At his master's death in 1798 he was taken into the service of the Duke of Leeds. Byron made Murray an allowance of £20 a year, and took him as soon as he could into his own service, and left him a legacy of £50 a year for life in his will.

[2] *Letters and Journals*, i. 224.

[3] Ibid., i. 233.

companion with an agreeable house in the upper part of Valetta,[1] and soon after his arrival Byron began to take lessons in Arabic from a monk who was employed in the public library. It was at Malta that Byron formed an acquaintance with Mrs. Spencer Smith (the Florence of *Childe Harold*), whose husband had been British Minister at Constantinople. Galt, in his Life of Lord Byron, says: "Her adventures with the Marquis de Salvo form one of the prettiest romances in the Italian language. Everything in her destiny was touched with adventure: nor was it the least of her claims to sympathy that she had incurred the special enmity of Napoleon." [2]

It is probable that this friendshp with Mrs. Spencer Smith involved Byron in a quarrel with the General's aide-de-camp, to which the following letter refers: [R. E.]

Byron to Captain Cary, A.D.C.

3, Strada di Torni [Malta],
September 18*th*, 1809.

Sir,—The marked insolence of your behaviour to me the first time I had the honour of meeting you at table, I should have passed over from respect to the General, had I not been informed that you have since mentioned my name in a public company with comments not to be tolerated, more particularly after the circumstance to which I allude. I have only just heard this, or I should not have postponed this letter to so late a period.

As the vessel in which I am to embark must sail the first change of wind, the sooner our business is arranged the better.

To-morrow morning at 6 will be the best hour, at any place you think proper, as I do not know where the

[1] Strada di Todni.

[2] Galt, p. 68. *Letters and Journals*, i. 244, calls it a platonic friendship; cf. Byron's letter to Lady Melbourne, 15 Sept. 1812.

officers and *gentlemen* settle these affairs in your island.

The favour of an immediate answer will oblige

Your obedient servant, BYRON.[1]

Cap[n] CARY [A.D.C. to Gen[l] Oakes].

On the 20th September, Byron and Hobhouse left Malta in a brig-of-war, the *Spider*, Captain Oliver, for Prevesa. In a few days after leaving Malta they were in the entrance of the Gulf of Lepanto, and landed at Patras, whither part of the convoy in company with the *Spider* was bound. After staying at Patras a few hours, the brig passed up the channel between Ithaca and Acarnania, skirted the Leucadian promontory, or Sappho's Leap, and anchored at Prevesa. From Prevesa they sailed down the gulf to Arta ; proceeding thence up country to Yanina, the chief residence of Ali Pacha. The great man was not at that time at Yanina, so the travellers proceeded to Tepeleni, a journey of about one hundred miles. On their arrival at Tepeleni they went at once to the residence of Ali, who received them with every mark of friendship. They were lodged in the Palace for four days, and had several audiences of the Vizier. From Tepeleni Byron and Hobhouse returned to Yanina, and thence to Prevesa, where, on account of the country being infested by brigands, they embarked on board an armed galliot of Ali Pacha's which was manned by forty men. They hoped to reach Patras, but no sooner were they clear of the port than a gale sprang up, and, everything in the vessel being out of order, all her sails were split,

[1] "Sept. 9, 1809. [19th ?] This evening Byron told me that he was going to fight a Captain C.C.C. having accepted a challenge from him for the next morning at 6 o'clock. Eventually the warlike Captain agreed to a reconciliation." *Recollections of a Long Life*, by Lord Broughton, i. 14.

and the mainyard was broken. In an unpublished letter to his sister Hobhouse thus describes the scene :

" The Captain wept bitterly, and all his Turks jumped below from fright and sea-sickness. We thought it was all over, and made up our minds to go out of the world as composedly as possible. . . . Fortunately the wind abated, and by midnight we were near the shores of Albania. Next day we left our brave captain in a little bay under the mountains of Suli, and being furnished with horses, in two days again reached Prevesa for the third time. Having tried the sea in vain, we resolved to go by land in despite of the brigands, and being furnished with a guard of 35 Albanian soldiers, we traversed Acarnania, crossed the Acheloüs, and embarked at Missolonghi for Patras, where we arrived in a few hours. As for brigands, we saw nothing of them, though we heard at one village that they had made their appearance in large bodies, and shot two men close to the houses a few days before our arrival. One day we travelled for eight hours through a thick oak forest, where we saw the earth thrown up fresh in three little heaps over the bodies of brigands who had been shot there in a late encounter. Though we were a week in this country, we did not meet one traveller on the roads during the whole passage through this part of Greece."

On 19 March 1810 Byron writes to his Mother : " I have traversed the greatest part of Greece, besides Epirus &c. &c., have resided ten weeks at Athens, and am now on the Asiatic side on my way to Constantinople."

On the 10th April Byron again writes to his Mother : " To-morrow, or this evening, I sail for Constantinople in the *Salsette* frigate, of 36 guns. She returns to England with our Ambassador Robert (afterwards the Right Honourable Sir Robert) Adair whom she is going up on purpose to receive."

The *Salsette* anchored between the Seven Towers and the Seraglio, off Constantinople, on the 13 May 1810; on the following day Byron and Hobhouse landed, and rode to their inn, which was situated at the corner of the main street of Pera. On 28 May a difficulty arose as to Byron's precedence in an official procession which was arranged to proceed to the Government House at Top-Kaneh. Hobhouse says[1]: "As Canning[2] refused to walk behind him, Byron went home. It took him quite three days to get over this trivial contretemps."

In referring to this incident Galt,[3] who must have heard full particulars at first hand, says: "It has grown into a custom, at Constantinople, when the foreign ministers are admitted to audiences of ceremony with the Sultan, to allow the subjects and travellers of their respective nations to accompany them, both to swell the pomp of the spectacle, and to gratify their curiosity. Mr. Adair, our Ambassador, had his audience of leave appointed soon after Lord Byron's arrival, and his Lordship was anxious to occupy a station of distinction in the procession. Mr. Adair assured him that he could obtain no particular place; that in the arrangements for the ceremonial, only the persons connected with the embassy could be considered, and that the Turks neither acknowledged the precedence, nor could be requested to consider the distinctions of our nobility. Byron, however, still persisted, and Mr. Adair was obliged to refer him on the subject to the Austrian Internuncio, a high authority in questions of etiquette, whose opinion was decidedly against Byron's pretension."

The following letter, though written nearly two months after the event, bears upon it. It is

[1] *Recollections of a Long Life*, i. 30.
[2] Afterwards Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.
[3] *Life of Byron*, p. 153.

likely that in order to satisfy himself, and for the guidance of his successor, Mr. Adair had referred the question to his own Foreign Office, and upon receipt of their reply he communicated its tenor to Byron. [R. E.]

Byron to His Excellency Robert Adair

PERA, *July 4th*, 1810.

SIR,—I regret that your Excellency should have deemed me, or my concerns of sufficient importance to give you a thought, beyond the moment when they were forced (perhaps unreasonably) on your attention.

On all occasions of this kind, one of the parties must be wrong—at present it has fallen to my lot; your authorities (particularly the *German*) are too many for me.

I shall therefore make what atonement I can, by cheerfully following not only your Excellency, "but your servant or your maid, your ox, or your ass, or anything that is yours."

I have to apologise for not availing myself of your Excellency's kind invitation and hospitable intentions in my favour, but the fact is, that I am never very well adapted for, or very happy in, society, and I happen at this time, from some particular circumstances, to be even less so than usual.

Your Excellency will, I trust, attribute my omissions to the *right* cause, or to any cause rather than disrespect in your

Truly obliged and very obedient humble servant,

BYRON.

On 10 July 1810, the British Ambassador, Robert Adair, had his audience of the Sultan, and on the 14th the *Salsette* sailed from Constantinople. Byron and Hobhouse were on board. The frigate touched at the island of Zea to land Byron, who thence made his way to Athens. On 17 July the two friends parted, and Hobhouse arrived at Malta in the *Salsette* on 27 July.

Byron to Hobhouse

PATRAS, *July 29th*, 1810.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—The same day which saw me ashore at Zea, set me forth once more upon the high seas, where I had the pleasure of seeing the frigate [1] in the *Doldrums* by the light of sun and moon.

Before daybreak I got into the Attics at Thaskalio, thence I dispatched men to Keratia for horses, and in ten hours from landing I was at Athens.

There I was greeted by my Lord Sligo,[2] and next day Messrs. North, Knight, and Fazakerly paid me visits. Sligo has a brig with 50 men who won't work, 12 guns that refuse to go off, and sails that have cut every wind except a contrary one, and then they are as willing as may be. He is sick of the concern, but an engagement of six months prevents him from parting with this precious ark. He *would* travel with me to Corinth, though as you may suppose I was already heartily disgusted with travelling in company. He has "*en suite*" a painter, a captain, a gentleman misinterpreter (who boxes with the painter), besides sundry idle English varlets.

We were obliged to have twenty-nine horses in all.

The captain and the *Drogueman* were left at Athens to kill bullocks for the crew, and the Marquis and the limner, with a ragged Turk by way of Tartar, and the ship's carpenter in the capacity of linguist, with two servants (one of whom had the gripes) clothed both in leather breeches (the thermometer 125°!!), followed over the hills and far away.

On our route, the poor limner in these gentle latitudes was ever and anon condemned to bask for half-an-hour, that he might produce what he himself termed a "bellissimo sketche" (pardon the orthography of the last word) of the surrounding country.

You may also suppose that a man of the Marchese's kidney was not very easy in his seat. As for the

[1] The *Salsette*.

[2] Howe Peter, the 4th Earl and 2nd Marquis of Sligo (1788–1816), had been Governor and Vice-Admiral of Jamaica. His name occurs frequently in this Correspondence. See p. 51, note.

servants, they and their *leather breeches* were equally immovable at the end of the first stage. Fletcher, too, with his usual acuteness, contrived at Megara to ram his damned clumsy foot into a boiling tea-kettle.

At Corinth we separated, the M[arquis] for Tripolitza, I for Patras.

Here hath just arrived the chirurgeon of the *Spider* from Zante, who will take this letter to Malta. I hope it will find you warm. You cannot conceive what a delightful companion you are now you are gone.

Sligo has told me some things that ought to set you and me by the ears, but they shan't; and as a proof of it, I won't tell you what they are till we meet, but in the meantime I exhort you to behave well in polite society. His Lordship has been very kind, and as I crossed the Ihstmus [1] of Corinth, offered if I chose to take me to that of Darien, but I liked it not, for you have cured me of "villainous company."

I am about—after a Giro of the Morea—to move to Athens again, and thence I know not where; perhaps to Englonde, Malta, Sicily, Ægypt, or the Low Countries.

I suppose you are at Malta or Palermo. I amuse myself alone very much to my satisfaction, riding, bathing, sweating, hearing Mr. Paul's musical clock, looking at his red breeches; we visit him every evening.

Nourse and Dacres had been at Athens scribbling all sorts of ribaldry over my old apartment, where Sligo, before my arrival, had added to your B.A. an A.S.S., and scrawled the compliments of Jackson, Deville, Miss Cameron, and "*I am very* UNAPPY *Sam Jennings.*"

Wallace is incarcerated, and wanted Sligo to bail him, at the "Bell and Savage," Fleet Rules.

The news are not surprising. What think you?

Write to me from Malta, the Mediterranean, or Ingleterra, to care of *ὁ μονόλοο Στράνε.*

Have you cleansed my pistols? and dined with the "Gineral?"

[1] Spelt correctly first, and then erased.

My compliments to the church of St. John's, and peace to the ashes of Bull.

How is the Skipper ? [1] I have drank his cherry-brandy, and his rum has floated over half the Morea. Plaudite et valete.

Yours ever, BYRON.

TRIPOLITZA, *August 16th*, 1810.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I am on the rack of setting off for Argos amidst the usual creaking, swearing, loading, and neighing of sixteen horses and as many men, serrugees included.

You have probably received one letter dated Patras, and I send this at a venture.

Vely Pasha received me even better than his father did, though he is to join the Sultan, and the city is full of troops and confusion, which, as he said, prevented him from paying proper attention.

He has given me a very pretty horse, and a most particular invitation to meet him at Larissa, which last is singular enough, as he recommended a different route to Lord Sligo, who asked leave to accompany him to the Danube.

I asked no such thing, but on his enquiry where I meant to go, and receiving for answer that I was about to return to Albania, for the purpose of penetrating higher up the country, he replied, "No, you must not take that route, but go round by Larissa, where I shall remain some time, on my way. I will send to Athens, and you shall join me ; we will eat and drink and go a hunting."

He said he wished all the old men (specifying under that epithet North, Forrest, and Stranè,) to go to his father, but the young ones to come to him, to use his own expression, "Vecchio con Vecchio, Giovane con Giovane." He honoured me with the appellations of his *friend* and *brother*, and hoped that we should be on good terms, not for a few days but for life.

[1] Captain, afterwards Commodore, Bathurst, R.N. He commanded the *Salsette*.

The first time I saw him he received me *standing*, accompanied me at my departure to the door of the audience chamber, and told me I was a *παλικαρι* and an *εὔμορφω παίδι*.

He was very facetious with Andreas and Viscillie, and recommended that my Albanians' heads should be cut off if they behaved ill.

I shall write to you from Larissa, and inform you of our proceedings in that city. In the meantime I sojourn at Athens.

You remember Nicolo at Athens, Lusieri's [1] wife's brother. Give my *compliments* to Matthews, from whom I expect a congratulatory letter.

I have a thousand anecdotes for him and you, but at present, *τί να κάμω* ? I have neither time nor space, but in the words of Dawes, "I have things in store."

I have scribbled thus much. Where shall I send it ? Why, to Malta or Paternoster Row.

Hobby, you wretch, how is the Miscellany [2] ? that damned and damnable work. "What has the learned world said to your Paradoxes ? I hope you did not forget the importance of Monogamy."

Stranè has just arrived with bags of piastres, so that I must conclude by the usual phrase of

Yours, &c. &c., Byron.

The Convent, Athens, *August 23rd*, 1810.

My dear Hobhouse,—Lord Sligo's unmanageable brig being remanded to Malta, with a large quantity of vases, amounting in value (according to the

[1] Lusieri, whom Byron so frequently mentions, was an Italian artist employed by Lord Elgin to make drawings of sculptures, etc., at Athens.

[2] Hobhouse's "Miscellany" was published in 1809, under the title of "*Imitations and Translations from the Antient and Modern Classics :* Together with original Poems never before published." The book had no success, and Hobhouse [see *Recollections of a Long Life*, i. 5] says : "I had been unwise enough to put my name to a volume of 'Poetical Miscellanies,' of which, although Lord Byron was one of the contributors, I soon became heartily ashamed."

depreciation of Fauriel) to one hundred and fifty piastres, I cannot resist the temptation of assailing you in this third letter, which I trust will find you better than your deserts, and no worse than my wishes can make you.

I have girated the Morea, and was presented with a very fine horse (a stallion), and honoured with a number of squeezes and speeches by Velly Pasha, besides a most pressing invitation to meet him at Larissa in his way to the wars.

I returned to Athens by Argos, where I found Lord Sligo with a painter, who has got a fever with sketching at midday, and a dragoman who has actually lied himself into a lockjaw.

I am most auspiciously settled in the Convent, which is more commodious than any tenement I have yet occupied, with room for my *suite* ; and it is by no means solitary, seeing there is not only " il Padre Abbate," but his " schuola," consisting of six " Ragazzi," all my most particular allies.

These gentlemen being almost (saving Fauriel and Lusieri) my only associates, it is but proper their character, religion, and morals, should be described.

Of this goodly company three are Catholics, and three are Greeks, which schismatics I have already set a boxing to the great amusement of the Father, who rejoices to see the Catholics conquer.

Their names are Barthelemi, Giuseppè, Nicolo, Zani, and two anonymous, at least in my memory. Of these, Barthelemi is a " simplice Fanciullo," according to the account of the Father, whose favourite is Giuseppè, who sleeps in the lantern of Demosthenes.

We have nothing but riot from noon to night. The first time I mingled with these sylphs, after about two minutes' reconnoitring, the amiable Signor Barthelemi, without any previous notice, seated himself by me, and after observing by way of compliment that my " Signoria " was the " piu bello " of his English acquaintance, saluted me on the left cheek, for which freedom being reproved by Giuseppè, who very

properly informed him that I was "μεγάλος"; he told him I was his "φίλος," and "by his beard" he would do so again, adding, in reply to the question "διὰ τὶ ἀσπάσετε|?" you see he laughs, as in good truth I did heartily.

But my friend, as you may easily imagine, is Nicolo, who, by-the-bye, is my Italian master, and we are already very philosophical. I am his "Padrone" and his "amico," and the Lord knows what besides. It is about two hours since, that, after informing me he was most desirous to follow *him* (that is me) over the world, he concluded by telling me it was proper for us not only to live, but "morire insieme."

The latter I hope to avoid—as much of the former as he pleases.

I am awakened in the morning by those imps shouting "Venite abasso," and the friar gravely observes it is "bisogno bastonare" everybody before the studies can possibly commence.

Besides these lads, my suite,—to which I have added a Tartar and a youth to look after my two new saddle horses,—my suite, I say, are very obstreperous, and drink skinfuls of Zean wine at eight paras the olne daily. Then we have several Albanian women washing in the "giardino," whose hours of relaxation are spent in running pins into Fletcher's backside.

"*Damnata di mi, if I have seen such a spectaculo in my way from Viterbo.*"

In short, what with the *women*, and the *boys*, and the suite, we are very disorderly. But I am vastly happy and childish, and shall have a world of anecdotes for you and the "citoyen." [1]

[1] Charles Skinner Matthews was drowned in the Cam early in August 1811. For a description of the accident, see letter from Henry Drury to Francis Hodgson (*Life of the Rev. Francis Hodgson*, i. 182, 185). He was a great friend of Hobhouse at Cambridge, and was also an intimate associate of Byron at "a very idle period of his college life." Matthews was Ninth Wrangler in 1805; First Members' Prizeman in 1807, and a Fellow of Downing in 1808. Although by nature indolent, he possessed extraordinary abilities and was able

Intrigue flourishes: the old woman, Theresa's[1] mother, was mad enough to imagine I was going to marry the girl; but I have better amusement. Andreas is fooling with Dudu, as usual, and Mariana has made a conquest of Dervise Tahiri; Vircillie, Fletcher and Sullee, my new Tartar, have each a mistress—"Vive l'Amour."

I am learning Italian, and this day translated an ode of Horace, "Exegi monumentum," into that language. I chatter with everybody, good or bad, and tradute prayers out of the mass ritual; but my lessons, though very long, are sadly interrupted by scamperings, and eating fruit, and peltings and playings; and I am in fact at school again, and make as little improvement now as I did there, my time being wasted in the same way.

However, it is too good to last; I am going to make a second tour of Attica with Lusieri, who is a new ally of mine, and Nicolo goes with me at his own most pressing solicitation, "per mare per terras." "Forse" you may see us in Inghilterra, but "non so, come, &c." For the present, good-even, Buona sera a vos signoria. Bacio le mani:—August 24th, 1810.

I am about to take my daily ride to the Piræus, where I swim for an hour despite of the heat; here hath been an Englishman ycleped Watson, who died and is buried in the Tempio of Theseus. I knew him not, but I am told that the surgeon of Lord Sligo's brig slew him with an improper potion, and a cold bath.

Lord Sligo's crew are sadly addicted to liquor. He is in some apprehension of a scrape with the Navy concerning certain mariners of the King's ships.

He himself is now at Argos with his hospital, but intends to winter in Athens. I think he will be sick of

to overthrow all antagonists. "His powers of mind," says Byron, "shown in the attainment of greater honours, against the ablest candidates, than those of any graduate on record at Cambridge, have sufficiently established his fame on the spot where it was acquired; while his softer qualities live in the recollection of friends who loved him too well to envy his superiority." (See letter of August 1811.)

[1] "The Maid of Athens."

it, poor soul, he has all the indecision of your humble servant, without the relish for the ridiculous which makes my life supportable.

I wish you were here to partake of a number of waggeries, which you can hardly find in the gun-room [1] or in Grub Street, but then you are so very crabbed and disagreeable, that when the laugh is over I rejoice in your absence. After all, I do love thee, Hobby, thou hast so many good qualities, and so many bad ones, it is impossible to live with or without thee.

Nine in the Evening.

I have, as usual, swum across the Piræus, the Signor Nicolo also laved, but he makes as bad a hand in the water as L'Abbé Hyacinth at Falmouth ; it is a curious thing that the Turks when they bathe wear their lower garments, as your humble servant always doth, but the Greeks not ; however, questo Giovane e vergognóso.

Lord Sligo's surgeon has assisted very materially the malignant fever now fashionable here ; another man *dead* to-day, two men a week, like fighting Bob Acres in the country.[2] Faurel says he is like the surgeon whom the Venetians fitted out against the Turks, with whom they were then at war.

Yours ever, Byron.

Patras, *September 25th*, 1810.

My dear Hobhouse,—I am at present in a very ridiculous situation, under the hands of Dr. Romanelli, and a fever which hath confined me to my bed for these three days past, but by the blessing of God and two glysters, I am now able to sit up, but much debilitated.

I will describe my situation in a parody on Pope's lines on the Duke of Buckingham, the which I composed during an interval for your edification.

> On a cold room's cold floor, within a bed
> If iron, with three coverlids like lead,
> A coat and breeches dangling o'er a nook,
> Where sits a doctor and prescribes a puke,

[1] The gun-room is the midshipman's mess in every man-of-war.

[2] *The Rivals*, Sheridan, 1775.

Poor B—r—n sweats,—alas! how changed from him,
So plump in feature, and so round in limb,
The scene of profanation, and champagne,
Or just as gay with scribblers in a ring
Of twenty hungry authors banqueting.
Here victor of a fever, and its friends,
Physicians and their art, his lordship *mends*.

I have been vomited and purged according to rule, and as my fever has almost subsided, I hope to weather this bout, which has been pretty tight, I assure you. Yet if I do fall by the Glyster pipe of Romanelli, recollect my injunction.

Odious! in boards, 'twould any Bard provoke
(Were the last words that dying Byron spoke);
No, let some charming cuts and frontispiece
Adorn my volume, and the sale increase.
One would not be unpublished when one's dead,
And, Hobhouse, let my works be bound in *Red*.

PATRAS, *October 2nd*, 1810.

DEAR YANI,—I have made a tolerable tour of the Morea, and visited Vely Pasha, who gave me a very pretty horse.

The other day I went to Olympia. Argos, Napoli, and Mantinea I saw in my route to and from Tripolitza.

I have seen a good deal of Lord Sligo; by the bye, there is a silly report all over the Morea, that he and I quarrelled, fought, and were wounded at Argos, there is not a word of truth in it from beginning to end.

If I kept any journal your request would be immediately complied with, but I have none.

Vely is gone to the Danube. I have been here on business with Stranè, but the moment Nicolo and myself are enough recovered to set out, I shall proceed again to Athens. I lodge in the convent.

Perhaps I am in possession of anecdotes that would amuse you and the Citoyen,[1] but I must defer the detail

[1] Charles Skinner Matthews.

till we meet, I have written to you three times since I left you in Zea, and direct my letters to Ridgways, where I presume you will be found on Sundays. You are now in England. What you tell me of the Miscellany grieves me (in spite of Rochefoucault) [1]; I commend your design of not letting the public off so easily; come out as a tourist, prose must go down.

But don't ask half a guinea for your next book. Consider, half a guinea carries a man to the Opera, and if he goes to Hookham's, 'tis odds but he buys more tickets than books, aye, and cheaper too; try seven shillings, Mr. Hobhouse, seven shillings, sir, stick to that, and let me tell you, when you have received seven hundred seven shilling pieces, they will cut a figure on your little deal writing-table. I have a regard for you, sir, and out of it, I beg you to strike off the odd three and sixpence.

I have nothing to request in England; everybody with whom I am at all connected seems asleep; as far as regards me, I shan't awake them. Hanson you may just fillup on the nose, and ask him from me if he is insane, not to have answered my letters. As to the others, their conduct is optional, and I have nothing to say. I shall certainly be in England in a few months, perhaps before, but I do not wish this to go forth, as it will only make Hanson more dilatory. If you hear anything you will write, and I will apprise you of my intentions as they rise and subside, for it would be very absurd in me to pretend to any regular plan. You have no doubt, a deal to do and say and hear and reply; wishing you well through it,

I am yours very sincerely &c., BYRON.

ATHENS, *November 12th*, 1810.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I write to you to apprise Mr. Hanson (as I have done in a letter, but wish you to repeat my refusal) that I will *not* sell Newstead according to his suggestion.

[1] "In the adversity of our best friends we often find something which does not displease us." Maxim 245.

I shall enter into no details but state the sum total, viz. that I am ruined. For further particulars enquire at No. 6.[1]

My compts. to Matthews and Davies[2]; send Mrs. Pigot a copy of your Miscellany, and believe me

Yours very truly, BYRON.

P.S. I beg you will repeat very seriously for me, that let the consequence be as it may, ruin to myself and all connected with me (D. and the old women inclusive) I will not sell Newstead.

No, *oχ*, *yok*, *yeo* (Albanesico), *Noa* (Nottinghamshirico) Now, *μὴ*, *ouk*, having given my negative in all the tongues I can refuse in, I call Christ, Mohamet, Confucius and Zoroaster to witness my sincerity and Cam Hobhouse to make it manifest to the ears and eyes of men, and I further ask his pardon for a long postscript to a short letter.

P.S. 2nd. If anybody is savage and wants satisfaction for my satire, write, that I may return and give it.[3]

ATHENS, *November 26th*, 1810.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Five or six letters are already on their passage, or perhaps arrived, since July, and I suppose after all your delays they will find you in London.

I have in my former sheets told you where I have been and what I have been doing, or rather not doing, for my life has, with the exception of a very few moments, never been anything but a *yawn*.

[1] Mrs. Pigot, with her daughter Elizabeth Bridget, and two sons lived on Southwell Green, in a house opposite to Mrs. Byron's Burgage Manor.

[2] Scrope Berdmore Davies (1783–1852). Byron before he went on this tour borrowed £4,800 from Davies, a sum which he repaid in 1814, and dedicated to him his *Parisina*. Byron in his MS. journal (*Life*, pp. 129, 130), says: "One of the cleverest men I ever knew, in conversation, was Scrope Berdmore Davies."

[3] *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*.

Here have been Lords and Ladies with many others of good report. Some have seen you at Malta and some have not. They tell me sad news of my good-for-nothing acquaintances; Sir G. W. and Sir B. G. are ruined (by-the-bye so am I but I wrote you that news by Fletcher) and Wallace is incarcerated; your friend Baillie is the only lucky man I hear of, his stepmother is dead; can't you inoculate yours with the same disorder?

Letters I have had, yours of Cagliari, and two billets from Hanson; he wants me to sell Newstead, but I won't and pray repeat my negative as strongly as possible. My affairs are greatly embarrassed, and I see no prospect of their ever being better, but I will not sell my abbey for man or the Devil.

Tell Davies in a very few months I shall be at home to relieve him from his responsibility, which he would never have incurred so long had I been aware "of the law's delay" and the (not Insolence) but "Indolence of Office." I presume he is very wroth, and in that mood, to use his frequent quotation, in which the "Dove would peck the *Est*ridge." I shall be glad to meet him on friendly terms, and it will not be my fault if we meet on others, but I cannot "truckle to his maudlin humours."

You refresh me greatly with the tidings of my satire [1]; if there be any of that martial spirit to require trial by combat, you will inform me which be they, the same impulse which made "*Otho a Warrior*" will make me one too.

And so Lucien B.[2] is "lagged" to Malta, he is really a phil*a*sopher.

I have now seen the World, that is the most ancient of the ancient part. I have spent my little all, I have tasted of all sorts of pleasure (so tell the Citoyen); I have nothing more to hope, and may begin to consider of the most eligible way of walking out of it;

[1] *English Bards*, etc.

[2] Prince Lucien Bonaparte.

probably I may find in England somebody inclined to save me the trouble.

I wish I could find some of Socrates's Hemlock, but Lusieri tells me it don't poison people now-a-days.[1]

I had a fever in the Morea, but my constitution beat both it and the doctors.

You talk of a tour (in print). I have told Cockerell to paint for you, but I have no journal of anything worth journalising. Why, man! you have materials enow without ramming in my damned nonsense, as Diggory says.[2] Here is a Scotch surgeon going to write on Greece. You must be beforehand; *his* will be very heavy work, I am sure, if I may judge by his jargon, it will make admirable subject for a review should you feel venomous.

I expect to find you in the press; pray what's become of the Miscellany?

Where is Hodgson?[3] where Dallas?[4] your prize essay! and the forty pounds annexed.

That timberhead Fletcher is sent home with a paper of some consequence to my mother; I don't miss him at all. Vircillie and Dervise are admirable waiters. I have a bandy-legged Turkish cook, and Nicolo Giraud is my Dragoman and Major Domo.

I have preferred your petition of marbles to Fletcher, who hath consented to take them, but he hath an ill memory. Heaven help him! You will write to Malta

[1] In later years he sent Mr. Murray some hemlock gathered under the walls of Athens which he regarded as the descendant of that which Socrates took. The dust to which it is now reduced is carefully preserved in Albemarle Street.

[2] *She Stoops to Conquer*, Goldsmith, 1773.

[3] Rev. Francis Hodgson (1781–1852), Provost of Eton in 1840.

[4] Robert Charles Dallas (1754–1842). Dallas's sister married George Anson Byron, son of Admiral Hon. John Byron. Dallas introduced himself to Byron by writing to compliment him on his *Hours of Idleness*. *English Bards* and *Childe Harold* were brought out under Dallas's auspices, the profits of which Byron made over to him. He also gave him the profits arising from the *Corsair*. (See also *Letters and Journals*, i. 168.)

till you hear of my arrival, and I will answer as well as I can.

Sandford Graham, whom you remember at Trinity, dines with me to-morrow (the 28th). He tells me that Davies is to be married to an heiress whom he picked up at Bath.

I am now an Italoquist, having been taught that tongue by necessity and Nicolo Girana, the brother of Lusieri's should-be wife.

Andreas Zantachi I sent off with your Malta letter, so I had no choice left between pantomime and silence, except gabbling Romaic and Italian, in which last I am intelligible. My Greek is *ἐστὶ καὶ ἐστὶ*, and my Latin of course walked off with the late dragoman of Dominus Macgill.

Cockerell, Foster, Graham, Baron Haller (a Teutonic and Cimbrian traveller), Lusieri, and myself, are to set off *μεθαύριον* for Cape Colonna in great force. A Bolognese physician is to be presented to me to-morrow at his own petition, having heard that I am the *celebrated aquatic* GENIUS who swam across the Hellespont when he was at Abydos. I believe the fellow wants to make experiments with me in diving.

You are now, Yani Hobhouse, digesting your remarks for Lintot [1] or Jacob Tonson,[2] and anticipating publication with your tongue to Matthews, or some such patient listener.

I suppose you have made the tour of Longman's back shop, and sunned yourself in the smiles of Mrs. Ridgway. If you have anything of your own, or my works, good or bad, let us have it. I shall be glad to hear that they are all alive.

You have sailed so long in the *Salsette* you must be quite a Tarpaulin. Kill your stepmother, and

[1] Barnaby Bernard Lintot (1675–1736) published poems and plays for Pope, Gay, Steele, and Rowe. He published Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, and his translation of the *Iliad*.

[2] Jacob Tonson, Lintot's contemporary, was also a publisher. He bought the copyright of *Paradise Lost*, and was much associated with Dryden. He died in 1736.

reconcile yourself to your father. I hope your brother was not in that damned advanced guard,[1] which has lately taken up its everlasting position at some place in Portugal according to the Frankfort Gazette.[1]

Fletcher I have sent home with despatches ; he is in great tribulation with numskull full of gales of wind, French privateers, Galliots, Black joke lugger, pressing at home, thieves in the Morea, row at his Castle with Sally, and a world of woes.

As for me, I am finished, for I will not sell, and have nothing left for the " Gemman as goes round for the tax upon income," according to the *Salsette* slang.

Believe me, Dear Yani, Yours ever, B * * *.

P. S., *December 5th*, 1810.

DEAR CAM,—I open my letter to mention an escape. Graham, Cockerell, Lusieri, myself, and a Bavarian baron went to Cape Colonna, where we spent a day.

At that time five-and-twenty Mainotes (pirates) were in the caves at the foot of the cliff, with some Greek boatmen, their prisoners.

They demanded of these who were the Franks above ? One of the Greeks knew *me*, and they were preparing to attack us, when, seeing my Albanians, and conjecturing there were others in the vicinity, they were seized with a panic, and marched off.

We were all armed (about twelve with our attendants), some with fusils, and all with pistols and ataghans, but though we were prepared for resistance, I am inclined to think we are rather better without a battle.

Some of the Greeks whom they had taken, told me afterwards they saw me with my double-barrel, mounted on a chestnut horse, and described the rest of our party very accurately.

Two of them arrived yesterday, released, but stripped of everything by the Mainotes.

These last deliberated some time, but as we were in

[1] Battle of Busaco, Sept. 27. This brother, Benjamin, was killed at Waterloo.

a very advantageous position among the columns, and they were ignorant of our numbers, and alarmed by some balls which whizzed over their heads by accident, they kept to the shore, and permitted us to depart in peace.

The Albanians, my bandy-legged Turkish cook, a servant of Lusieri's and myself, had guns and pistols, the rest, side arms and pistols, but how we should have carried on the war is very doubtful. I rather think we should have been like Billy Taylor and carried off to sea.

We are all snug in our winter quarters after the same tour we made last year.

Graham and myself got drunk at Theratia; the former in his Bacchanism decapitated a large pig with a Highland broadsword, to the horror of Lusieri; and after all we could not eat him. Good-bye, Yani.

Yours a second time, B****N.

CAPUCHIN CONVENT, ATHENS,
January, 10th, 1811.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have written at intervals several letters, some of which it is probable you have received.

Two have arrived of yours, dated Malta and Cagliari, and I conceive there be others *on* the sea, or *in* it, for you must have been months in England.

Since your departure from the Cylades I have been principally in Attica, which I have traversed more than once, besides two tours in the Morea, of the particulars of which Mr. Fletcher, now on his voyage with despatches, will apprise you.

Here be many English, and there have been more, with all of whom I have been and *am* on dining terms, and we have had balls and a variety of fooleries with the females of Athens.

I am very undecided in my intentions, though stationary enough, as you perceive by my date.

I sometimes think of moving homewards in spring,

and sometimes of not moving at all till I have worn out my shoes, which are all as good as new.

Hanson has at last written, and wants me to sell Newstead. I *will not*; and though I have in more than one letter to you requested you to corroborate and assist this *negative*, I beg in this and all subsequent communications, to entreat you to tell him and all whom it may concern, that I will not sell my patrimony. I suppose, however, the adjustment of that, and other damned affairs will drag me to England.

Well, sir, and I suppose you are holding forth to your acquaintance, on the subject of your travels, and they are all very glad to see you, and you have been tipsy and loquacious as usual on such occasions, and are just beginning to subside into the old track of living, after shaking about sixty pairs of hands, and seeing the play and such like, all of which must be very new to a voyager from the Levant.

You will present my respects to Matthews and Davies, who is I hear about to throw himself away on a rich wife, and none of the seemliest, according to my reporter.[1]

Pray what profits make ye of the Miscellany? Eh, eh! I warrant you now, you are preparing a tome of travel for the press. I have no journal, or you should have it to abet your design.

I am now tolerable in Italian, and am studying the Romaic under a master, being obliged to cashier my Latin with my last dragoman, and betake myself to the moderns.

I have sent a bark to Smyrna in the faint hope of letters, and shall not fill up this sheet till its return.

January 14th, 1811.

My boat is returned with some newspapers, and duplicates of letters already arrived. None from you, but all in good time.

I shall certainly not (without something very novel

[1] He never married.

occurs), move towards your Island till spring, nor even then if I receive any further remittances, a business which I hope you did not fail to urge to my agent.

You have, I humbly presume, forwarded all my epistles to their respective destinations.

I certainly wish to hear how you go on, and what plan you have chalked out. Five and twenty is almost too late in life for anything but the Senate, or the Church. I wish you was a parson, or a counsellor-at-law; by the bye Lord Erskine did not commence till nearly thirty.[1]

I do not think your sire so blameable[2]; the fault lies of course with the stepdame; the old story; Baillie has got rid of his "injusta noverca," see what it is to have luck!

As you are fond of scribbling, and are said to have a talent that way, why don't you, and *Matthews*, and some other wits, undertake some periodical, hebdomadal or diurnal concern, I leave you to find out what, but I think you might bring such a scheme to bear.

Fyott is this day arrived from Mount Athos ("ἅγιον ὄρος"), he has discovered nothing to signify in the manuscript way; Graham and Haygarth are to depart shortly, one for Stamboul, Haygarth for Sicily. I shall send this by the latter.

Galt[3] is in Pera, full of his Sour Wine Company speculation. I shall look at him in Mycenæ, in the "Prima Vera." He sent me a Candiot poem for you, but being the worst Romaic, and the vilest nonsense even seen, it was not worth the carriage.

As you know Athens and all its peculiarities, I shall

[1] Lord Erskine was twenty-eight when he was called to the Bar in 1778. He became Lord Chancellor in 1806.

[2] Benjamin Hobhouse (born 1757) married, first, Charlotte, daughter of Samuel Cam of Chantry House, Wilts, who was the mother of Byron's friend. She died, and in 1793 he married Amelia, daughter of Rev. Joshua Parry, by whom he had nine children. He was created a Baronet in 1812.

[3] John Galt, novelist (1779–1839). He travelled with Byron from Gibraltar to Malta, and was at Constantinople with him. In 1830 he published his *Life of Byron*.

not afflict you with description. I have three horses (one a gift of Vely Pasha), and live rather better and cheaper than last winter. I see a good deal of the English, and Lusieri, chiefly of late, and have had no disputes with anyone.

I am tranquil, and as contented as I suppose one can be in any situation.

I have also a Bavarian Baron and celebrated painter, taking views for me.

Yours very affectionately and truly, B——.

January 17th, 1811.

Written inside the wrapper.

P.S. This goes by Haygarth, who moves in a few days to Malta, by way of the Morea and Zante. Graham is off too. I stay till spring, at all events till I receive letters, which as usual take their time on the way.

Good-night, you port-drinking fellow. I am just returned from dining with Haygarth.

Byron to Hodgson

ATHENS, *January 20th*, 1811.

MY DEAR HODGSON,—In most of your letters, that is to say two, the only ones I have received of yours, you complain of my silence. This complaint I presume to be removed by this time, as I have written frequently, but more particularly by H., who is of course long ago landed, and will amply gratify any further curiosity you may have beyond the limits of a letter. I also wrote by the Black John, which however was taken off Algiers with the Capt. Moses Kennedy and several bags of long letters, but especially Hobhouse's intimates have to regret the capture of some enormous packets, which cost him a world of pains at Constantinople, in the Troad and elsewhere, as I can witness, and unless the French Government publish them, I am afraid we have little chance of recovering these inestimable manuscripts. But then to make amends he himself followed close on the heels of his letters (by the bye I fear *heels* of letters is a very incorrect metaphor) and

will tell the world all how and about it, unless he also has been boarded and taken off Algiers. Talking of taking, I was nearly taken myself six weeks ago by some Mainote pirates (Lacedemonians and be damned to them) at Cape Colonna, but being well armed, and attended, the varlets were afraid, or they might have bagged us all with a little skirmishing. I am still in Athens making little tours to Marathon, Sunium, the top of Hymettus, and the Morea occasionally to diversify the season. My Grand Giro finished with Constantinople and I shall not (I think) go further Eastward, but I am sure of nothing so little as my own intentions, and if I receive cash and comfortable news from home I shan't trouble your foggy Island for amusement. I am studying modern Greek with a Master, and my current tongue is Levant Italian, which I gabble perforce. My late dragoman spoke bad Latin, but having dismissed him, I am left to my resources, which consist in tolerably fluent Lingua Franca, middling Romaic (modern Greek) and some variety of Ottoman oaths of great service with a stumbling horse or a stupid servant. I lately sent to England my only remaining Englishman with some papers about money matters, and am left d'ye see all by myself in these outlandish parts, and I don't find it *never* the *worse*, for friends and servants, that is to say fellow countrymen in those capacities, are troublesome fellow travellers. I have a variety of acquaintance, French, Danes, German, Greek, Italian and Turkish, and have contracted an alliance with Dr. Bronstedt of Copenhagen, a pretty philosopher as you'd wish to see. Besides I am on good terms with some of my countrymen here, Messrs. Graham and Haygarth, and I have in pay a Bavarian Baron named " Lynch " (pronounce it *Lynk*) who limns landscapes for the lucre of gain. Here also are Messrs. Fyott, Cockerell and Forster, all of whom I know, and they are all vastly amiable and accomplished. I am living in the Capuchin Convent, Hymettus before me, the Acropolis behind, the Temple of Jove to my right, the Stadium in front,

the town to the left; eh, Sir, there's a situation, there's your picturesque! nothing like that, Sir, in Lunnun, no not even the Mansion House. And I feed upon Woodcocks and Red Mullet every day, and I have three horses (one a present from the Pasha of the Morea), and I ride to Piræus, and Phalerum, and Munychia, which however don't look quite so magnificent after the harbours of Cadiz, Lisbon, Constantinople and Gibraltar, not forgetting Malta. I wish to be sure I had a few books, one's own works for instance, any damned nonsense on a long Evening. I had a straggling number of the E. Review given me by a compassionate Capt. of a frigate lately, it contains the reply to the Oxonian pamphlet on the Strabonic controversy, the reviewer seems to be in a perilous passion and heaves out a deal of Slack-jaw as the Sailors call it. You have to direct to Malta, whence my letters are or ought to be forwarded. In two days I shall be twenty-three, and on the 2d above a year and a half out of England. I suppose you and Drury sometimes drink one's health on a speech day, and I trust we shall meet merrily, and make a tour some summer to Wales or Scotland, it will be a great relaxation to me jaunting once more in a Chay. I need not write at length as Hobby is brimful of remarks, and it would be cruel to curtail him of a syllable. Tell him I have written to him frequently, as indeed I have to yourself and also to Drury and others, but this is a plaguey distance for a "Single Sheet."

Yours alway, BYRON.

Byron to Hobhouse

ATHENS, *March*, 18*th*, 1811.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Though I neither know where you are or how you are, I write at a venture by way of Zante, as I have already done many times, indeed so often that I can't afford you more than this present sheet.

I have just finished an imitation in English verse (rhyme of course) of Horace's "Art of Poetry," which

I intend as a sequel to my "English Bards," as I have adapted it entirely to our new school of poetry, though always keeping pretty close to the original. This poem I have addressed, and shall dedicate to you. In it you fill the same part that the "Pisones" do in Horace, and if published it will be with the Latin subjoined.

I am now at the "Limæ labor" though I shan't keep my piece nine years; indeed I question if Horace himself kept to his own precept.

I am at present very fond of this bantling, as the youngest offspring of authors, like that of mothers, is generally most cherished because 'tis the *weakest*.

Pray what are you doing? Have you no literary projects in hand? Can't you and Matthews and some of our wits commence some literary journal, political, critical, or what not?

I don't mean, however, like a common magazine or review, but some respectable novelty which I recommend and leave to your own brilliant considerations.

You see my scribbling propensities, though "expelled with a fork," are coming on again.

I am living here very amicably with English, French, Turks and Greeks, and to-morrow evening I gave a supper to all the Franks in the place. You know Athens so well, I shall say no more about it.

As you have been so sparing and myself so liberal in late communications, I shall fold up this rag of paper, which I send to-morrow by a *snail* to Patras. However, it is more than you deserve from

Yours very angry, Byron.

There are no letters extant from Byron between 18 March 1811 and 15 May of that year. There is nothing to indicate the exact date when Byron left Athens on his homeward voyage. As the journey from Athens to Malta in those days took about ten days, we may assume that Byron left Athens on or about the 4th March 1811.

MALTA, *May 15th*, 1811.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Your last two letters of 1810 I have just received.[1] They find me on my way homewards. In the beginning of June I sail in the *Volage* frigate with French prizes and other English ships of war, in all, I believe six or seven frigates.

I must egotize a little. I am in bad health and worse spirits, being afflicted in body with what Hostess Quickly in Henry V. calls a villainous "Quotidian Tertian"; it killed Falstaff and may me. I had it first in the Morea last year, and it returned in quarantine in this infernal oven, and the fit comes on every other day, reducing me first to the chattering penance of Harry Gill, and then mounting me up to a Vesuvian pitch of fever, lastly quitting me with sweats that render it necessary for me to have a man and horse all night to change my linen.

Of course I am pulled down with a murrain, and as I hear nothing but croaking from H[anson] I am hastening homewards to adjust (if possible) my unadjustable affairs.

He wants me to sell Newstead, partly I believe because he thinks it might serve me, and partly I suspect because some of his clients want to purchase it.

I will see them d—d first.

I told you I never would sell it in a former letter, and I beg to repeat that negative.

I have told him fifty times to sell Rochdale, and he evades and excuses in a very lawyer-like and laudable way.

Tell Davies it is with the greatest regret I see him in such a situation, from which he shall be, at all events and at all expense, relieved, for if money is not ready, I will take the securities on *myself*.

I have looked, asked, and raved after your marbles, and am still looking, asking, and raving, till people think they are my own. Fletcher was my precursor. Close, Landor, Mrs. D., have all been examined and

[1] Those letters were respectively dated Oct. 6 and Dec. 10.

declared "Ignoramus." And yet it is so odd that so many packages should have vanished, that I shall (in the intervals of my malady) search the surface of the island.

I am sorry to hear the stationary propensities of your "Miscellany," and attribute them, firstly, to the dead weight of extraneous productions with which you loaded your Pegasus; secondly, to the half-guinea (one may buy an opera ticket for less at Hookham's), and thirdly, to that "*Walsh-ean*" preface [1] from which you and *Matthews* predicted such unutterable things.

Now what would I do? Cut away the lumber of Ld. Byron, the Honble. G. Lamb, Mr. Bent the Counsellor at Law, and the rest of your contributory friends, castrate that Boccacian tale, expunge the *Walshean* preface, (no offence to Matthews,) add some smart things of your own, change the title, and charge only seven-and-sixpence.

I hear Jeffrey has promised to review you; this will lift you into life, and seriously speaking, I think your own productions would have done much better alone, and the "Imitations of Juvenal" are certainly as good in their kind as any in our language.

I have completed an imitation of Horace "De Arte Poetica," in which you perform the part of *both* the "*Pisos*." I have taken a good deal of pains with it, but wish you to see it before I print, particularly as it is addressed to you. In one part (I deviate and adapt from the original) I have apostrophized you as a lover of ("Vive la Bagatelle"), and it is curious that I should *afterwards* receive a letter from you on the subject of your projected society with that motto.[2]

[1] See *Letters and Journals*, v. 125.

[2] Hobhouse in his letter (6 Oct. 1810) says: "I have been thinking that we may call our society *La Bagatelle*; that we may wear a green coat with a black velvet collar, and a yellow button, with a comic mask, and *Vive la Bagatelle* inscribed round the rim; that we may employ a printer to publish our bites and quizzes which must be serious lies in prose—abusive satires with names of sober citizens to them . . . this would put every person of respectability in fear of his character."

I had written the lines without being at all aware of such an intention, and of course am pleased with the coincidence as well as your idea.

But more of this in England. I wish you would fill up your outlines with your friends. I have nobody to recommend or to object against, but shall be happy to make a *joint* in the tail of your comet!

I have heard from Matthews. Remember me to him most socially; he tells me you have thoughts of betaking shortly to Cambridge, surely this is better than the Militia; why go abroad again? five-and-twenty is too late to ring bells and write notes for a Minister of Legation; don't think of such a thing, *read*, *read*, *read*, and depend upon it, in two years' time, fortune or your father will come round again.

My picture of which you speak is gone to my mother, and if not it was and is my intention *not* to be *shot* for a long time,[1] and therefore, thou false and foul insinuator! I repel your surmise, as "De Wilton" did the Adjuration of the voice from High Cross, Edinburgh (see 4th, 5th, or 6th Canto of Marmion), and as it succeeded with him, I trust it will with me, you unnatural (not supernatural) croaker!

Avaunt thee, Cam! I retort and repel your hint, and hope you yourself will be—shooter of a great many ptarmigans (or men, if you like it better), but don't draw me into your parties to shoot or be shotten! for I am determined to come off conqueror on all such occasions.

I expect letters from you by next packet. My fantastical adventures I reserve for you and Matthieu, and a bottle of champagne.

I must go down to Newstead and Rochdale, and my mother in a late letter tells me that my property is estimated at above a *hundred thousand pounds*, even

[1] In Hobhouse's letter dated 6 Oct. 1810, he says: "General Graham was praising your full-length portrait by Saunders, and as he was praising it very much, I told him that the picture is mine, which you know it is, for you gave it me, and I will have it, tho' you may keep it till you are shot."

after all debts, &c. are paid off. And yet I am embarrassed, and do not know where to raise a shilling.

With regard to our account, don't think of it, or let your father think of it, for I will not hear of it till you are in a state to pay it as easily as so many shillings.[1] I have fifty resources, and besides my person is parliamentary—pay your tradesmen—I am none. I know your suspicions past and present, but they are ill-founded.

Will you meet me in London in July, and go down to Rochdale and Notts by way of Cambridge to see Matthews? Leave a direction at Ridgways.

Believe yours indelibly, B.

"Volage" Frigate, at Sea, *June 19th*, 1811.

My dear Hobhouse,—In the gentle dullness of a summer voyage I shall converse with you for half-an-hour.

We left Malta on the 2nd, with three other frigates, inclusive of the Lissa prizes, and we are on our way, they to glory, and I to what God pleases.

I am recovered from my Tertian, but neither my health nor my hitherto hoydenish spirits are as rampant as usual.

I received at Malta your letters, which I have answered; and I have succeeded in the discovery and embarkation of your memorable marbles; they shall be brought to town, or left in proper care at Portsmouth, till you can arrange their removal.

I am accompanied by two Greek servants, both middle-aged men, and one is Demetrius your old mis-interpreter.

My own antiquities consist of four *tortoises*, and four skulls, all taken out of ancient sarcophagi.

I shall first endeavour to repair my irreparable affairs, and it seems I must set out for Lancashire, for I shall

[1] Byron had lent Hobhouse all the money necessary for their travels until such time as he could repay him. When they parted company Hobhouse owed Byron £818.

neither have coals nor comfort till I visit Rochdale in person. I wish you would meet me or tell me where to meet you, as I wish to consult you on various subjects, besides the pleasure I shall experience in your society.

With regard to all *Dross* business between us, don't think of it till it is most perfectly convenient. I would rather you did not think of it at all, but as I know your sentiments on the subject, I shall not annoy you by such a proposition.

You tell me fine things—very fine things—on the *literary* "*lay*," I suppose from your natural knowledge of our weak side, and with a view to set me *marble-hunting*, by dint of compliment. I have, as I told you before, completed an Imitation of Horace, "Ad Pisones," addressed to you, and to be published forthwith, as you will readily conjecture.

I hope the Miscellany mends in sale. Its failure must be attributed to that accursed "Walsh-ean" preface, which the Citoyen M. would recommend, and you see what it has come to.

M[atthe]ws has written to me; thank him, and say further I shall have great pleasure in gratifying his curiosity, which, however, he must not raise too high.

You talk of the militia—Santissimi Coglioni!—the militia at five-and-twenty; boys over your head, and brutes under you, mess, country-quarters, courts-martial, and quelling of riots. If you will be mad or martial ('tis the same thing) go to Portugal again, and I will go with you (for I have some serious thoughts of it, if matters are intricate at home), but don't waste your time in mere *holiday* soldiering, as Major Sturgeon would call it.

You have not been in London, it should seem. I shall proceed there from Portsmouth to Reddish's or Dorant's for a few days, and afterwards to Newstead, and most probably abroad again as soon as my arrangements will admit.

Ld. Sligo is on his way home; I left him at Malta in quarantine. Bruce is gone or going to Persia; he is

a singular being [1]; on the night he left Athens he made me a profession of friendship, on the extremity of the Piræus, the only one I ever received in my life, and certainly very unexpected, for I had done nothing to deserve it. Whitbread (in Peter Pindar's visit from George Guelph) says he is too old for a *knight*, and I am too old for a friend, at least a new one. Tell M[atthews] I have bade adieu to every species of affection, and may say with Horace, "Me jam nec fœmina," etc., he will finish the lines. Seriously, I can't think, for the soul of me, what possessed Michael, for, like the Rovers, "a sudden thought struck him." We had dined together, so I know he was not drunk; but the truth is, he is a little chivalrous and romantic, and is smitten with unimaginable fantasies ever since his connection with Lady H. Stanhope. However, both her ladyship and he were very polite, and asked me to go on with them a second time to Constantinople; but having been there once, and preferring *philosophy* at Athens, I staid in my convent.

Matthews tells me that Jeffrey means to review your book; if he does, it will do you good, one way or the other, but I think it probable he will praise you. Have you nothing new for the press?

Don't be discouraged by the Miscellany, but throw the blame on your friends, and the preface, and Matthews, and me, and the damned trash of your auxiliaries. There is something very impudent in my offering this pert consolation, but I hope you will stand in no need of it, and begin to receive half-guineas at a rare rate; by-the-bye, would not seven-and-sixpence have sold and sounded better? Matthews has been advising you to philosophize at Cambridge—do, and I'll join you for a time, and we will tipple and talk Matthews to death with our travels, and jest and squabble, and be as insipid as the best of them.

Bold Webster (by way of keeping up that epithet, I suppose) has married, and, *bolder* still, a sister of

[1] Michael Bruce, who was at Athens with Byron.

Ld. V[t] Valentia, and, *boldest* of all, has published letters to the Commr. in Chief![1] Corpo di Caio Mario! what will the world come to? I take this to be one of the newest events "under the sun."

Had he no friend, no relation, no pitying monitor to snatch the manuscript from one devil to save it from the other? Pray are the letters in prose or verse?

I am dull, "dull as the last new comedy" (*vide* Goldsmith's "Good Natured Man"), though Capt. Hornby[2] is a gentlemanly and pleasant man, and a Salamander in his profession, fight anything; but as I have got all the particulars of his late action out of him, I don't know what to ask *him* next any more than *you*. But we are infested in the cabin by another passenger, a teller of tough stories, all about himself. I could laugh at him were there anybody to laugh with; as it is, I yawn and swear to myself, and take refuge in the quarter gallery[3]; thank God he is now asleep, or I should be worried with impertinence. His name is Thomas, and he is Staff- or Stuff- Apothecary to General Oakes, who has rammed him down our throats for the voyage, and a bitter Bolus he is, that's the truth on't.

But I long for land, and then for a post-chaise, and I believe my enjoyments will end there, for I have no other pleasure to expect that I know of.

We have had a tedious passage, all except the Straits, where we had an easterly gale.

Dear Hobby, you must excuse all this facetiousness, which I should not have let loose if I knew what the devil to do, but I am so out of spirits, and hopes,

[1] James Wedderburn Webster (1789–1840) was with Byron at Athens in 1810. He married Lady Frances Annesley, daughter of Viscount Valentia, who held the Irish title of Earl of Anglesey, and was in 1793 created Earl of Mountnorris, also an Irish title. Byron and Lady Frances were to become closely associated in later years.

[2] Sir Phipps Hornby, who was a midshipman in the *Victory* in 1804 and then in command of the *Volage*, took part in the battle of Lissa in 1811, and died 1867.

[3] Sailor phrase for Captain's W.C.

and humour, and pocket, and health, that you must bear with my merriment, my only resource against a Calentura. Write to me; I am now going to patrole the melancholy deck. God be w' ye!

Yours always, B.

On the envelope.

P.S. Take a mouthful of Saltwater poetry, by a Tar on the late Lissa Victory.

> If I had an *edi*cation
> I'd sing your praise more large,
> But I'm only a common foremast Jack
> On board of *the le Volage* ! ! ! ! !

"VOLAGE" FRIGATE, BAY OF BISCAY, *July 2nd*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—This very day two years we sailed from Inghilterra, so that I have completed the period I expected to be absent, though my wishes were originally more extensive. When we shall arrive, God knows! but till then I continue scribbling to you for lack of other argument.

My situation is one you have been used to, so you will feel without further description, but I must do Captain Hornby the justice to say, he is one of the best marine productions in my recollection.

We have been beating about with hazy weather this last fortnight, and to-day is as foggy as the Isle of Man.

I have been thinking again and again of a literary project we have at times started, to wit,—a periodical paper, something in the Spectator or Observer way. There certainly is no such thing at present. Why not get up one, Tuesdays and Saturdays. You must be Editor, as you have more taste and diligence than either Matthews or myself, (I beg M.'s pardon for lowering him to the same line with me,) and I don't think we shall want other contributors if we set seriously about it. We must have for each day, one or two essays, miscellaneous, according to circumstances, but now and then political, and always a piece of poetry of one kind or other.

I give you these hints, to digest the scheme at leisure ; it would be pleasant, and with success, in some degree profitable. Above all we must be secret, at least at first. "Cosa pensate." Perpend, pronounce, Respond.

We can call it "La Bagatelle" (according to your idea), or Lillibulero, if you like it, the name won't matter so that the contents are palatable.

But I am writing and projecting without knowing where you are, in country or college quarters, though I hope you have abandoned your Militia scheme.

Matthews gave me hopes that Arms would give way to the Gown, as you had visions of returning to Granta. God keep bad port out of your carcase! you would certainly fall a victim to messing the very first campaign. I shall be in town a very short time, meaning to proceed to Notts and thence to Rochdale.

The accursed Pharmacopole is at present on deck,—the only pleasure I have had these three weeks. But I hope soon to tell you in person how truly I am Yours,

B——.

CHAPTER II

RETURN TO ENGLAND

(1811–1812)

Byron to Hobhouse

REDDISH'S HOTEL, *July 15th*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—The day after to-morrow (17th) I will set out for Sittingbourne to confabulate; I thank you for your advice, which I shall observe.

My "Imitations of Horace" is now transcribing at Cawthorn's, so that I cannot bring the fair copy, but the moment it is out of his hands you shall have it.

Your marbles are left at the Custom House, Sheerness, as I know not where to send them, and to smuggle them was impracticable; you will get them on sending a cart or a letter.

I dine with Davies to-day; he came to me *drunk* last night, and was very friendly, and has got a new set of jokes, but to you they are doubtless not new.

Drawings I have none *ready*, but have an excellent painter in pay in the Levant. I have brought you *one* (from Cockerell), of Athens, and have in my possession a Romaic lexicon in three qo. volumes, two or three Greek plays (*i.e.* translations from Metastasio and Goldoni), Meletius's Geography (we stole it from the Bishop of Chrysso), a Greek grammar or two, two live Greeks (both between 30 and 40 years of age, and one of them your old dragoman Demetrius), and some other Romaic publications (and a manuscript or two, which you shall publish, as they are very curious, if you like), all of which, with the owner, are as usual very much at your service.

I will bring some of the books with me.

Yours ever, BYRON.

REDDISH'S HOTEL, *July 31st*, 1811.

MY DEAR H.,—My Rochdale concerns not only wait, but make me *wait* too, and (to withdraw the quibble *à la* Davies) will prevent my *waiting* upon your Cornish minership.

This comes of soldiering—I say no more. I would come down or go down, but I really have not money to carry me to Dover and back, no, not by the long coach, and what is more, I do not know when I shall have.

My affairs are in the most lackadaisical posture, and seem like Goldsmith's "Young The.," to get never the better for age. Davies I see nothing of, though for aught I know he may be in town, but this I cannot ascertain, having never entered a coffee-house since my return, and meaning by the blessing of reformation to keep out of them.

The Albanian vocabulary, and everything else, is at a standstill with this Irish expedition. Cawthorn may swear (by-the-bye he will have to swear perhaps at Hewson Clarke's half-a-dozen trials, who is to be prosecuted by Mrs. B.[1] and myself for *libel Scan. Mag. Breach of privilege*, &c. &c. in fifty different actions next November for buffooneries in the "Scourge"), Cawthorn may swear, but his face certainly discovered your work.

The "Scourge" is in the hands of the attorney-general; the foolish fellow of an editor, instead of something like the shadow of truth, has run aground upon charges of "Illegitimacy" and drunkenness against Mrs. B., "descent from murderers" and a variety of other phrases, which will look lovely in an indictment.

So you will perceive in the "Cork Chronicle," or the "Munster Mercury," the scurrilous speeches which will doubtless be made on both sides; for Mrs. B.'s and mine are separate concerns, and mine again is a *separated*

[1] Mrs. Byron: his mother. Mrs. Byron died the following day, August 1. For full particulars of the action see *Letters and Journals*, i. 321.

concern, as he has attacked my peerage, and in short it will be a long and loud affair, and answer no purpose but punishing these poor devils, and making an advertisement to Cawthorn's book.

I see nothing to prevent your publication, if you are serious. Your friends can correct the press, but Cawthorn supplicates an octavo, your 16mo won't do, people love margin.

Lord Elgin has been teazing to see me these last four days. I wrote to him, at his own request, all I knew about his robberies, and at last have written to say that as it is my intention to publish (in Childe Harold) on that topic, I thought proper, since he insisted on seeing me, to give him notice that he might not have an opportunity of accusing me of double dealing afterwards.

So you see how my matters stand. I believe we differ on Lord E[lgin]'s subject, or else he will be prettily trimmed among us, *i.e.* Dr. Clarke, you, and myself, prose and verse all rising in revenge of Minerva.

Let me hear from you before your banishment. I am afraid I shall be abroad again before your return, but wherever I am you will reckon me amongst your friends. As for my little circle of friendship, death and what is called *Life* have cut it to a segment.

Yours always, BYRON.

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, *August 10th*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—From Davies I had already received tidings of the death of Matthews, and from *M. a letter* dated the *day* before his *death*. In that letter he mentions you, and as it was perhaps the last he ever wrote, you will derive a poor consolation from hearing that he spoke of you with that affectionate familiarity, so much more pleasing from those we love, than the highest encomiums of the world.

My dwelling you already know is the house of mourn-

ing,[1] and I am really so much bewildered with the different shocks I have sustained, that I can hardly reduce myself to reason by the most frivolous occupations.

My poor friend, J. Wingfield, my mother, and your best friend (and surely not the worst of mine), C. S. M., have disappeared in one little month, since *my return*, and without my seeing *either*, though I have *heard* from *all*.

There is to me something so incomprehensible in death, that I can neither speak nor think on the subject. Indeed, when I looked on the mass of corruption which was the being from whence I sprung, I doubted within myself whether I *was*, or whether she *was not*.

I have lost her who gave me being, and some of those who made that being a blessing. I have neither hopes nor fears beyond the grave, yet if there is within us "a spark of that Celestial fire," M[atthews] has already "mingled with the gods."

In the room where I now write (flanked by the *skulls* you have seen so often) did you and Matthews and myself pass some joyous unprofitable evenings, and here we will drink to his memory, which though it cannot reach the dead, will soothe the survivors, and to them only death can be an evil.

I can neither receive nor administer consolation; time will do it for us; in the interim let me see or hear from you, if possible both.

I am very lonely, and should think myself miserable were it not for a kind of hysterical merriment, which I can neither account for nor conquer; but strange as it is, I do laugh, and heartily, wondering at myself while I sustain it.

I have tried reading, and boxing, and swimming, and writing, and rising early, and sitting late, and water, and wine, with a number of ineffectual remedies, and

[1] Mrs. Byron died on 1 August 1811. Byron was not present when she died. He had been detained in London by law business, and only heard of his mother's illness one day before her death.

here I am, wretched, but not "melancholy or gentlemanlike."

My dear "*Cam of the Cornish*" (Matthews's last expression!!) may man or God give you the happiness which I wish rather than expect you may attain; believe me, none living are more sincerely yours than

BYRON.

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, *August 30th*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Scrope Davies has been here and seemed as much affected by late events as could be expected, from one who has lived so much in in the world. His society was (as it always wont to be) very reviving, but now he is gone, and I am solitary and sullen.

Not a scrap of paper has been found at Cambridge, which is singular. I can hardly agree with you in a wish to forget, I love to remember the dead, for we see only the virtues, and when our best friends are thus removed, we become reconciled to our own prospects, and "long to be with them, and at rest."

I think when your mind is more calm you ought to write his epitaph, and we will erect to his memory a monument in some appropriate place. I do not know any other who would do him justice; indeed, it is *your right*, and perhaps your *duty*.

Then "give his fame to the winds, and let the harp sigh over his narrow house"; you are now in the land of Ossian.

In the poem which I wrote abroad, and is now in the hands of Murray the bookseller for publication, at the close of the first canto, which treats of Spain, I have two stanzas in commemoration of W[ingfield], who died at Coimbra; and in a note to those, having occasion to mention the loss of three persons very dear to me, in so very short a time, I have added a very short sentence or two on the subject of our friend; which, though they can neither add to his credit or satisfaction, will at least show my own pride in the acquaintance of such a man.

Your book goes on well, and I trust will answer your purpose and my expectations. Demetrius has made out a most formidable vocabulary, on which I wait for further orders.

I do not know who is your deputy in town; perhaps Baillie, or Shepherd. I have had a letter from Bankes, of the patronising kind, where I am invited to "*one* of *my places in Wales!!*"

I am going to Lancs., and am in daily expectation of Hanson to back me; and I mean to marry, prudently if possible; that is, wealthily; I can't afford anything to Love.

I wish you were here; but you *will* be *here*, and we shall laugh again as usual, and be very miserable dogs for all that.

My sister writes me melancholy letters; things are not going on well there, but mismanagement is the hereditary epidemic of our brood.

Hodgson is battening on "Laver Moor, Herefordshire," Davies at Harrowgate.

I am to visit him in October at King's Coll.

Dallas is running to and from Mortlake, with his pocket full of proofs of *all* his *friends*, who are all scribblers and make him a packhorse.

I am here boxing in a Turkish pelisse to prevent obesity, and as usual very much yours,

BYRON.

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, *September 20th*, 1811.

MY DEAR H.,—Our friend Scrope[1] is a pleasant person, a "facetious companion," and well "respected by all who know him;" he laughs with the living, though he don't weep with the dead, yet I believe he would do that also, could it do them good service, but good or bad we must endeavour to follow his example, and return to the dull routine of business or pleasure, though I fear the more we see of life, the more we shall regret those who have ceased to live—we will speak of them no more.

[1] Scrope B. Davies.

Demetrius has completed a copious specimen of the Arnaut dialect, which shall be sent to-morrow; the print might perhaps be improved by an elongation of the *ὑποκάμισον*—as the drawers don't appear to advantage below it; altogether it is very characteristic.

I had a visit lately from Major (Capt.) Leake[1] "*en passant.*" He talks of returning to Ali Pacha, and says the E[dinburgh] R[eview] knows nothing of Romaic; he is grown less taciturn, better dressed, and more like an (English) man of this world than he was at Yanina.

J^n^. Claridge is here, improved in person a good deal, and amiable, but not amusing. Now he is a good man, a handsome man, an honourable man, a most inoffensive man, a well informed man, and a—*dull* man, and this last damned epithet undoes all the rest; there is Scrope B. Davies, with perhaps no better intellects, and certainly not half his sterling qualities, is the life and soul of me, and everybody else, but my old friend, with the soul of honour and the zeal of friendship, and a vast variety of insipid virtues, can't keep me or himself awake.—Alas, "*Motley's the only wear.*" As for Claridge you can't ever quarrel with him, and my life is as still as the Lake before the Abbey, till the North wind disturbs the one, and Fletcher and my learned Thebans break my pottery, or my tenants, or Mr. Hanson ruffle the other.

I expect Hanson down daily to proceed to Rochdale, or nothing will ever be settled.

You are coming out in quarto, but I wish you to be out first, or at any rate *one* before the other; I am going to use you very shabbily, for I fear *that* Note is a "sine quâ non" to "C^e^. Harold;" had it been the Horace, you should have had it all to yourself. As it is, you shall have it to extract the essence, long before

[1] William Martin Leake, soldier, traveller, and antiquary. He was employed in instructing Turkish troops at Constantinople; made a survey of Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece; and in 1824 published his *Journal of a Tour in Asia Minor.*

it is published, and the information will be all the better for being in your own words, and if you are out first (as you most probably will be) I trust we shall answer both our purposes. In my notes to the poem I have assigned your publication as my excuse for saying very little about the Greeks, and referred my readers to *your* work for more interesting particulars of that people.

You *must* have six plates at the least, indeed ten or twelve would be better. Of course they are all at your service, and the Romaic MSS. such as they are.

I must contrive to meet you in the spring or summer, and will bring Hodgson or Davies with me. I am invited to Cambridge in Oct^r. to meet them and Dr. Clarke.

I don't know whether to be glad or sorry that you will not be *there*; if I am *glad*, you will conceive it is on YOUR account.

I shall write with Demetrius' Vocabulary.

Dear H, Yours ever, B.

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, *October* 13*th*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Demetrius is laid up with a kick from a horse, so that for a few days he will be unserviceable to you or me. I sent the Vocabulary to Cawthorn, to forward it in a parcel, being too heavy for franking.

The letter of Ali Pacha shall be translated and returned or left at your publishers as you think best. Now for your Queries.

The Chimariots are *Arnauts*; what Greek they speak is acquired. Some are Mussulmen, indeed, most of them; in Albania proper, past Tepeleni except a few villages all are *Turks* (in religion) as far as *Bosnia*, where *all* are Mussulmen and the bravest of the brave.

The Suliotes are Christians, but wear the Camesa, Berat and Arnout Beligrade are *one*, 12 hours from Tepeleni,—Ibrahim Pacha has nothing to do with Scutari, the Pacha of Scutari is a plaguy, troublesome fellow; Ibrahim's predecessor, *Giaffer* Pacha,

was poisoned by *Ali's* order, with a cup of coffee—in the bath at *Sophia*, Ali *lately* married his daughter,—Coul Pacha, the predecessor of Ali, was a very formidable personage.

I will some day draw up an account of my reception by Veli Pacha in the Morea for your edification, but at present I am out of sorts.

I don't know how to send Meletius, he is so *well bound* and if we lose him!! If you want any part consulted, refer me to the "Cap," but surely you will be in England before you come forth, and can see the books yourself.

You are exiled to Ireland, quite a military Swift! we may now Swiftify and Popify as if we were wits of the last century.

What shall we do with Davies? he is too facetious for a *Gay* and not simple enough; the dog shall be a second-hand St. John (chiefly on account of his irreligion), Hodgson shall be——what shall he be? Baillie, Dr. Arbuthnot—"almost as quickly as he *conquered* Spain." *Cawthorn*, *Lintot;* and Dallas the *Duchess* of Queensberry!

So we may play at wits, as children (no offence) at soldiers.

You will address here as usual. I am about to join Davies at Cambridge, but your letters will be forwarded.

You shall have the note when printed, but my publisher is in no hurry, nor am I.—Do you get on. I hope we shan't contradict one another, Dear H.

Yours ever, B.

Newstead Abbey, *October* 14*th*, 1811.

Dear Hobhouse,—In my last I answered your queries, and now I shall acquaint you with my movements, according to your former request.

I have been down to Rochdale with Hanson; the property there, if I work the mines myself, will produce about £4000 pr. ann.; but to do this I must lay out at least £10,000 in etceteras, or if I chance to *let* it

without incurring such expenditure, it will produce a rental of half the above sum, so we are to work the collieries ourselves, of course.

Newstead is to be advanced immediately to £2100 pr. ann., so that my income might be made about £6000 pr. ann. But here comes at least £20,000 of debt, and I must mortgage for that and other expenses, so that altogether my situation is perplexing.

I believe the above statement to be nearly correct, and so ends the chapter. If I chose to turn out my old bad tenants, and take monied men, they say Newstead would bear a few hundreds more from its great extent; but this I shall hardly do. It contains 3800 acres, including the Forest land, the Rochdale manor, 8256 acres of Lancashire, which are larger than ours.

So there you have my territories on the earth, and in "the waters under the earth;" but I must marry some heiress, or I shall always be involved.

Now for higher matters. My Boke is in y^e^ press, and proceeds leisurely; I have lately been sweating notes, which I don't mean to make very voluminous,—some remarks written at Athens, and the flourish on Romaic which you have seen will constitute most of them. The essence of that "*valuable information*," as you call it, is at your service, and shall be sent in time for your purpose. I had also by accident detected in Athens a blunder of Thornton, of a ludicrous nature, in the *Turkish language*, of which I mean to make some "pleasaunt mirth," in return for his abuse of the Greeks. It is the passage about Pouqueville's[1] story of the "Eater of Corrosive Sublimate."

By-the-bye, I rather suspect we shall be at right angles in our opinion of the Greeks; I have not quite made up my mind about them, but you I know are decisively inimical.

I will write to you from Cambridge, or elsewhere. Address to Newstead. Claridge is gone, after a lethargic visit of three perennial weeks. How dull he is!

[1] *Poetry*, vol. ii, p. 195.

I wish the dog had any *bad* qualities that one might not be ashamed of disliking him.

Adio ! D. V. E. Umilissimo Servitore.

B.

KING'S COLLEGE CE., *October 22nd*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I write from Scrope's rooms, whom I have just assisted to put to bed in a state of *outrageous* intoxication. I think I never saw him so bad before.

We dined at Mr. Caldwell's, of Jesus Coll., where we met Dr. Clarke and others of the gown, and Scrope finished himself as usual. He has been in a similar state every evening since my arrival here a few days ago.

We are to dine at Dr. Clarke's on Thursday. I find he knows little of Romaic, so we shall have *that* department entirely to ourselves. I tell you this that you need not fear any competitor, particularly so formidable a one as Dr. Clarke would probably have been.

I like him much, though Scrope says *we* talked so bitterly, that he (the said Scrope) lost his listeners.

I proceed hence to town, where I shall enquire after your work, which I am sorry to say stands still for "*want of copy*," to talk in technicals.

I am very low spirited on many accounts, and wine, which, however, I do not quaff as formerly, has lost its power over me. We all wish you here, and well, wherever you are, but surely better with us. If you don't soon return, Scrope and I mean to visit you in quarters.

The Marquis Sligo[1] is in a great scrape about his kidnapping the seamen; I, who know him, do not

[1] On Dec. 30, 1812, the Marquis of Sligo was tried before Sir Wm. Scott, Lord Ellenborough, and Baron Thompson for enticing two seamen from H.M. Navy at Malta to serve on his own vessel, the *Pylades*, and for having concealed them and made false statements when his ship was searched. He was found guilty, and was fined £5,000 and condemned to be imprisoned in Newgate for four months.

think him so culpable as the Navy are determined to make him. He is a good man.

I have been in Lancashire, Notts, but all places are alike; I cannot live under my present feelings; I have lost my appetite, my rest, and can neither read, write, or act in comfort.

Everybody here is very polite and hospitable, my friend Scrope particularly; I wish to God he would grow sober, as I much fear no constitution can long support his excesses. If I lose him and you, what am I? Hodgson is not here, but expected soon; Newstead is my regular address. Demetrius is here, much pleased with y^e^ place, Lord Sligo is about to send back his Arnaouts. Excuse this dirty paper, it is of Scrope's best. Good night.

Ever yours, BYRON.

8, ST. JAMES' STREET, *November 2nd*, 1811.

DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I never meant to confound the Bosnians and Arnaouts, but merely to say that *all* the Bosniacs and most of y^e^ *Upper Albanians* were Mussulmen. The Suliotes are villainous Romans and speak little Illyric.

I am full of news and business, to the which—

Firstly I have been engaged in a correspondence with *Anacreon Moore*,[1] who requested me *to retract* or atone for a "charge of falsehood" *he* supposed me to have made against an address to the public which he published—God knows when—on his duel with Jeffrey.

I neither *retracted* nor would *apologise*, never having seen y^e^ address in question, and told him in answer to his *demi-hostile*, *semi-amicable* epistle (for it began with a complaint and ended with a hope that *we* should be "*intimate*"), that I was "willing" to adopt any "conciliatory proposition that should not compromise my own honour, or failing that, to give him satisfaction."

[1] See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 63–8.

This being done under the auspices of Scrope,[1] who was to have enacted as second in case of need, Mr. Moore was *satisfied*, and on Monday next we are to meet at the house of "Pleasures of Memory" Rogers,[2] who is M.'s friend, and who has behaved very well in y^e^ business. So, as dinners are preferable to duels, and nothing has been conceded on my part, further than the truth, viz., that I know nothing of said address (did you ever see it? and what was it about?) and consequently could not give the lie to what I never beheld, and as the Bard has been graciously pleased to talk about his "sincere respect for my talents," and "good will," &c.—why, I shall be glad to know what you think of the matter.

You will remember that the first hint towards acquaintance came from Moore, and coldly enough I met it, as I fairly told him till the principal point was discussed between us, I could not reply to the other part of his letter, but now that is settled, Mr. Rogers (whom I never saw) has sent me an invitation to meet the Irish Melodist on Monday. However you shall see all the letters and copies of mine when we come together again.[3]

Yesterday Hodgson dined with me, and muddled himself so much, that at the play he was with difficulty kept in order.

Bold Webster dropped in after dinner and managed to annoy Hodgson with his absurdity; he talked of H.'s satire and particularly his address to the Electric ! ! ! (Eclectic) critics, and Porson's edition of Phocion ! ! ! and finished by asking H. if he had ever read his (W.'s) *pamphlet* ! !

He then, to mend matters, entered into a long defence of his brother-in-law,[4] without any occasion, as nobody

[1] Scrope Davies.

[2] Rogers' account of this dinner is given in *Letters and Journals*, ii. 66.

[3] For full particulars see *Letters and Journals*, ii. 59–65. See also *The Times*, August 12, 1806.

[4] Lord Valentia.

had mentioned his name, persisted in spite of all endeavours to make him change y^e^ subject, and concluded by saying that Lord Courtenay was "called cousin by the King of Prussia"!!!

Now all this is verbatim conversation of bold Webster. You will think me Bankesing but it is a fact Per Dio!

Cawthorn has Ali's letter, but I will send it if you please in a few days. Pray what are become of *all* my *Greek* epistles? They are not with y^e^ prints.

The note you shall have, but it is not in the Press yet, and lies in Dallas' possession. Demetrius is better of the Excalcitration, and is at his wits' end to answer y^e^ queries. Dr. Clarke was highly polite to him and me, and offered me his journals, &c. I admire him much. Scrope is at Newmarket. I was well enough treated at Cambridge, but glad to leave it, it made me "*leman-choly*" for many reasons and some d—d bad ones.

Yours ever, Μπαιρων.

8, St. James' Street, *November 3rd*, 1811.

Dear Hobhouse,—I wrote yesterday, but as usual expatiated more on my own concerns than yours, and owe you a second letter. I shall order a transcript of y^e^ note, and send it to you forthwith, as it will not be in *my* press for some time.

Ibrahim Pacha is 'nown brother to Coul the obnoxious. No—I am wrong—brother to Giaffer, the victim of Ali. The Pacha of Scutari's name I forget, and never heard of *Ochrida* as a pachalic.

As to boundaries, I always thought dear Delimvinachi was the frontier. Adem Bey, whom we met going to Libochabo, is *dead*, in spite of Seculario and Frank; he was nephew to Ali, as you know. He was twenty-three years of age.

Do come to England, and copy Meletius in person. If you can't it will then devolve on your humble servitor. I will facsimilize if it be requisite.

I do take much interest in your q[uart]o,[1] and have no doubt of its success, Albania is untrodden ground. I don't know that a traveller has much to do with "likes and dislikes," but you see Dr. Clarke's "Dislikes" have answered very well.

My own mind is not very well made up as to y^e^ Greeks, but I have no patience with the absurd extremes into which their panegyrists and detractors have equally run.

I believe the No. of the Edinburgh Review, with all that stuff on the Romaics, was written by Blomfield.[2] Leake[3] agreed with me that it was very sad, and you know *he* is well qualified to judge.

This is a *secret*, and Dr. Clarke told it me. Knowing *your* discretion to be similar to *mine*, or at least that there is nobody in Enniscorthy who will be much edified by it, I send it over St. George's Channel.

I find I am a member of y^e^ Alfred Club,[4] and consequently a pot companion of your amiable progenitor, Lord Valentia, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and such cattle: I believe Ward is also one.

Bold Webster is in a scrape with the "Morning Post," "Morning Chronicle," and all other Posts, Morning and Evening, about some letters on politics with which he has lately been tying cannisters to his tail. They charged him ten pounds for inserting one of these precious billets, and if they had asked a hundred, the disgrace to the paper was honestly worth it. It is in vain that *wife*, *relations*, *friends* and *enemies* have risen up in fierce opposition to his malady, nothing but a thumbscrew, or a whitloe on the itching finger, can quell his scribbling.

[1] *Journey through Albania and other Provinces of Turkey*, 1812.

[2] Charles James Blomfield (1786–1857), afterwards, Bishop of London. He edited five plays of Æschylus, and contributed on classical subjects to various periodicals.

[3] See p. 47.

[4] In Albemarle Street. Byron says: "The Alfred was pleasant—a little too sober and literary, and bored with Sotheby and Sir Francis D'Ivernois. It was upon the whole a decent resource on a rainy day."

He has exposed himself; nay, hurt himself, for he was soliciting a Scotch place, and wrote a defence of Lord Fingal by way of ingratiating himself with Ministers ! ! ! and the worst of it is that everybody knew this devil of a defence to be his, though *sans* signature, and for fear they should not, he told it unto all men. His wife is very pretty, and I am much mistaken if five years hence she don't give him reason to think so. Knowing the man one is apt to fancy these things, but I really thought she treated him, even already, with a due portion of conjugal contempt, but I daresay this was only the megrim of a misogynist.

At present he is the happiest of men, and has asked me to go with them to a tragedy to see his *wife cry*!

Just before I left Malta I wrote, during my ague, a copy of Hudibrastics as an adieu to La Valette, which I gave to Com[r] Fraser, because it contained a compliment to Mrs. F., without intending the thing to be bandied about. No sooner were we sailed than they were set in circulation, and I am told by a lately arrived traveller, that they are all, but particularly Oakes,[1] in a pucker; and yet I am sure there is nothing to annoy any body, or a single personal allusion throughout as far as I remember, for I kept no copy.[2]

When you write, address to Cawthorn's, and he will forward your epistles, as I don't know where I am going, or what I am about to do.

You can't conceive how I miss you. Much more than I did after your departure in the Archipelago, for there we were but two, but here there are so many things we should laugh at together, and support each other when laughed at ourselves, that I yearn for you prodigiously.

[1] General Oakes, who commanded the troops at Malta.

[2] *Adieu, ye Joys of La Valette*, written 26 May, 1811, not published until 1832. Probably the lines—

> " Adieu the supercilious air
> Of all that strut ' en militaire,' "

did not appeal to the General's sense of humour.

Sir J. Debathe [1] hath called upon me; he is a good deal improved in everything but person, and I think may live a session or two longer on his good behaviour.

Claridge, my DEAREST friend (for he cost me much more than *fifteen* shillings) is indeed dull. As to his "attachment," will attachment keep one awake? or say pleasant things? or even soar beyond an execrable Oxonian pun? and at our time of life to talk of "attachment!" When one has left school, aye and college too, sdeath, one would think you were like Euripides, who admired the autumn of Agatho. When I was a child I thought as a child (saith St. Paul and so say I), but now give me a man of calibre, a little sense, a sprinkling of information, and as for "attachment," I leave it with other trifles.

> "To those who trifle with more grace and ease,
> Whose trifling pleases, and whom trifles please."

I believe my Rochdale statement was pretty correct; with this proviso, that if I could afford to lay out twenty or thirty thousand pounds on it, the income would probably be double the utmost I mentioned.

Davies also saw at Harrowgate several Lancashire gentry, who told him the same thing, and I suppose he speaks truth on this occasion, having no motive to the contrary.

But you know I always was, and always shall be, an embarrassed man, and I must e'en fight my way through between the files of ruined nobles and broken shopkeepers which increase daily.

I must marry; you know I hate women, and for fear I should ever change that opinion, I shall marry.

My Satire is going into a fifth edition, to which will be added the "Hints from Horace." Hodgson tells me

[1] Sir James De Bathe (1792–1828) was with Byron at Harrow. "He was one of my favourites, whom I spoilt by indulgence." (*Life*, p. 21.)

your tale from Boccace is much liked, with all its indecency.[1]

Bland[2] is come back from France.

Yours ever, BN.

8, ST. JAMES' STREET, *November 9th*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have lately been leading a most *poetical* life with Messrs Rogers, Moore, and Campbell, the latter indeed I have only seen once at dinner at Mr. R.'s, but that *once* was enough to make me wish to see him again. He was to have dined with me to-day, but is laid up at Sydenham, however, I shall see him next week. Rogers and Moore are very pleasing, and not priggish, as poetical personages are apt to be. Campbell is not at all what you would suppose him from his writings, but agreeable nevertheless.

I have also seen a good deal of Ward, the eloquent, who meets me to day with Rogers, Moore and our Hodgson to dinner. I am very glad to have been elected at the Alfred, not only because it is a difficult thing, but I have met there several old acquaintances, particularly Peel[3] the secretary *sub secretario*.

I saw there Sotheby the scribbler, who is a disagree-

[1] A tale foolishly inserted in Hobhouse's *Miscellany*. In an unpublished letter to Byron, dated 10 Dec. 1810, Hobhouse says: "The Miscellany is the most damned of any given work of the present day. I do not mean damned by the critics, for they have said nothing to my paradoxes—but damned by its own indelicacy which is really too gross, but principally in a tale of mine taken from Boccace, which the Devil, the father of all damnation, must have prompted me to insert.

[2] Rev. Robert Bland (nicknamed "Don Hyperbolo"), a friend of Hodgson. He is mentioned in *English Bards*, etc. Bland was associated with Merivale in the publication (1813) *Collections from the Greek Anthology*. He also published two volumes of original verse. He spoke French like a native. When curate of Kenilworth he died, in 1825.

[3] Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850), Byron's schoolfellow at Harrow, and afterwards the Tory Member for Cashel, was at this time Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies under Lord Liverpool. He became Prime Minister in 1834.

able dog, with rhyme written in every feature of his wrinkled physiognomy.

I have also received, indirectly, a kind of pacific overture from Lord Holland, so you see, people are very civil when one don't deserve it.

All Webster's connections are at their wits' end, to cure him of his malady. They have applied to me to talk to him seriously on y^e^ subject, and I *have* talked, but to no purpose, for he lost his temper, and invited me to a *controversy* in the *newspapers*!!! Valentia is vastly annoyed, and so is W.'s spouse, but nothing will do, he persists in his laudable design of becoming ridiculous.

Cawthorn is at a stand-still for lack of Copy, *Copy*, *Copy*!

Will you come here at Xmas, and bring or send my Romaic MSS.? or I will put you into Fosbrooke's "Gloster Journal," so I will.[1]

Believe me, Yours ever, Μπαιρων.

8, St. James's Street, *November 16th*, 1811.

My dear H.,—That is a most *impudent* simile and incorrect, for the "*vomit*" came to the "*dog*" and not the "*dog*" to the "*vomit*," and if you will teach me to spit in anybody's face without offence, I will shake off these gentlemen with the greatest good-will; however, I have never called on either, so am not to blame for the slightest degree of good manners.

I send you Demetrius'[2] traduzione, and make the most of it; you must orthographize it in both languages, as you will perceive.

I dine to-day with Ward to meet the Lord knows whom. Moore and I are on the best of terms. I answered his letter in an explanatory way, but of course conceded nothing in the shape of an apology;

[1] Thomas Dudley Fosbroke (1770–1842) was an antiquary. In 1802 he published his *British Monachism*. He probably edited a local paper at Gloucester. He certainly wrote a *History of the City of Gloucester* in 1819.

[2] Demetrius was Byron's valet.

indeed his own letters were an odd mixture of complaint, and a desire of amicable discussion.

Rogers said his behaviour was rather Irish, and that mine was candid and manly. I hope it was, at least the latter; I consulted Scrope before I sent off my letter, but now the matter is completely adjusted, as R. said, "honourably" to both.

Sotheby, whom I abused in my last, improves; his face is rather against him, and his manner abrupt and dogmatic, but I believe him to be much more amiable than I thought him.

Rogers is a most excellent and unassuming soul, and Moore an epitomé of all that's delightful.

As to self, I am ill with a cough, Demo has tumbled down stairs, scalded his leg, been kicked by a horse, hurt his kidneys, got a terrible "catchcold" (as he calls it), and now suffers under these accumulated mischances.

Fletcher is fat and facetious.

Yours ever, *Μπαιρων.*

8, ST. JAMES' STREET, *November 17th*, 1811.

DEAR H.,—I wrote you a gossiping letter yesterday, and shall do as much to-day, being partly confined with a cough which prevented me from dining with Ward according to invitation.

Demetrius' decypherings and paraphrase I sent off at the same time and trust they will put you in a good humour.

But I want my Romaic MSS. being in labour of "Childe Harold" who is coming costively into the world, after having undergone the ordeal of Gifford's and Campbell's inspection, not that I am indebted to either for a single alteration, for the same reason that Lady Mary refused Pope, with a "No touching," &c. However, they have been pleased to say very pleasant things, if I may trust the word of others for Gifford, and Campbell's own for himself.

The thing was shown by Murray (as you know I never

was in the habit of bandying MSS. of my own) and against my privity or concurrence. However, it has, by good luck, turned out well, or I should have been "feroce" with the bookseller, and very deservedly.

Good paper, clear type, and vast margin as usual.

I have been sweating notes to a large amount, so that y^e^ "Body of y^e^ Book" will be bulky. Sixty-five stanzas of y^e^ first Canto are printed.

Cawthorn is also at work with a fifth Edition of "English Bards"; this and "Hints from Horace," with a thing on Lord Elgin called the "Curse of Minerva" which you have never seen, will contribute to Master Lintot's department, and make a monstrous vol. of crown octavo.

You are very slow with *Copy*, and will delay till the season is over. Your book will not come in before green peas; surely you don't intend it for summer reading.

The four pages of to-day's proof are all I have redde, as Cawthorn is shy of showing me your work, Lord knows why.[1]

He had an MS. offered (I am not at liberty to mention names [2]) through the medium of Hodgson, who is not the author, however, which he rejected, though backed by your humble servitor. Not that I much admired the said MS. which abused all my acquaintances, but I wished to oblige Hodgson.

I am living as quietly as you can be, and have long left off wine entirely, and never enter a coffee-house of any description. My meal is generally at y^e^ Alfred where I munch my vegetables in peace.

Town is empty, but I stay on business, to get rid of these damned annuities.

Webster is vanished with his wife,—Ward, Peel, Rogers, Moore, Sotheby, Sir W. Ingilby are the few I have lately seen most of, with Lord Valentia, in whom I

[1] *Travels in Albania.*

[2] Probably Bland—*Letters and Journals*, ii. 77.

see nothing very "Cativo," and as everybody speaks to him one can't well avoid it.

I wish you would come over before Xmas, and go down to Notts with me. All the fathers on the earth and under it should never keep me at Enniscorthy.

I give you joy of your dinner with the *Bishop* of *Fernes*. Was not "*Atherton*" a Bishop? What says the Dean? What a proper scoundrel that same serving man must have been; I thought better of the Irish.

Mrs. Fraser,[1] Adair's antipathy,[2] is in town: surely she is agreeable, and Bob a coxcomb to find fault with her phantasies. Consider it is a woman, and what can be expected? Peacock is come home, and dangling after her secondo al' suo solito.

L[d] Sligo is in Ireland, and a scrape; his Arnaouts are going back to Rumelia, Government would not allow them to go to Ireland,—Why? nor further than ten miles from London—Wherefore?

Dallas is bringing out a farce; his last did not succeed bitterly, but has merit.[3]

Pratt has put Joe Blackett into two volumes as bad as Purgatory.[4] Poor Joe, killed first and published afterwards; if the thing had been reversed, the wonder had been less, but the cruelty equal.

I have heard nothing of Miss Milbanke's posthumous buffooneries; but here is Miss Seward, with 6 tomes of

[1] Mrs. Fraser was at Malta.

[2] Sir Robert Adair, late Ambassador at Constantinople.

[3] Dallas's farce *Not at Home* was played at the Lyceum in Nov. 1809.

[4] Joseph Blacket, the Cobbler-poet, is mentioned both in *English Bards* and the *Hints from Horace*. A volume of his poetry was published in 1809, under the title of *Specimens*, edited by Samuel Jackson Pratt, a poet of the Cruscan school demolished by Gifford in his *Baviad*. Among those who befriended Blacket was Miss Milbanke, who afterwards became Lady Byron. His poems were collected, and published by Pratt in 1811, for the benefit of Blacket's orphan daughter. Blacket, who was born in 1786, died in 1810.

the most disgusting trash, sailing over the Styx with a fool's cap over her periwig as complacent as can be.[1]

Scott is her Editor, I suppose, because she lards him in every page.

Yours aye, Μπαιρων.

8, St. James' Street, *December 3rd*, 1811.

My dear H,—All the MSS. are arrived, but your letter is dissatisfactory. I mean to annex some specimens of Romaic, but by no means to enter into details for which I have neither time nor talent. But supposing such to have been my intention, is not the field wide enough for both? I declare to you most sincerely that I would rather throw up my publication entirely, than be the means of curtailing a page of yours.

There is a most formidable serious puff about you and your work in the last No. of the "Critical Review," and we have all great expectation from it, and I am convinced that the more you say on Romaic the better.

My thing shall be sent off to you the moment it is finished, and before it is with the public; and so far from impeding you I did hope that it would be a stepping stone instead of a stumbling block in your way. My notes will not be extensive, nor the specimens numerous, nor shall I say one word on the grammar or minutiæ of y^e^ language. So don't give up an idea on my account, and as to contradicting me you will only do it where I am wrong, and I shall forgive you, and so will the world.

Indeed I have assigned in my notes, as a reason for saying so little, that *you* have much more to say on the subject. So don't make me lie, in that respect at least.

Why not translate the drama, I certainly shall *not*,

[1] Anne Seward, poetess, who sang the friendships of the Ladies of Llangollen. She was known as "The Swan of Lichfield." She supplied Boswell with particulars concerning Johnson, and was acquainted with most of the celebrated writers of her day (1747–1809). Sir Walter Scott visited her at Lichfield in 1807, and she bequeathed to him her literary works and "remains." To Constable, the Edinburgh publisher, she left her letters. Six volumes of her letters appeared in 1811.

but insert a translation in verse of the "Δεῦτε" song.

Besides, you have the Albanian Vocabulary, and *I* merely two Albanian songs with a bald translation in prose.

The extracts and specimens I leave to the learned to construe, but I think you should insert them with a translation.

The Devil's in it if there is not a field for both.

By-the-bye, why not publish a Romaic lexicon? I have an excellent one; it is only translating the Italian into English, and prefacing, and editing, and such a work is sure to sell, and much wanted. I wish you to undertake this, and will put the three quartos into your hands if you will undertake it.

I am just returned from Cambridge, where I have been visiting Hodgson and Harness,[1] an old Harrow friend whom you don't know. Do, pray, come to England, and be my guest during your stay both in town and at Notts. Hodgson and Harness are to be in Notts at Xmas. Come and join us.

I wish your damned regiment was disbanded. S'death, why don't you desert? Everybody enquires after you, and what answer can I give?

Yours ever, B.

8, St. James' Street, *December 9th*, 1811.

My dear Hobhouse,—At length I am your rival in good fortune. I, this night, saw *Robert Coates* perform Lothario at the Haymarket,[2] the house crammed, but bribery (a bank token) procured an excellent place near the stage.

[1] William Harness (1790–1869), a great friend of Byron, both at Harrow and at Cambridge. He was Boyle lecturer at Cambridge in 1822. He was perpetual curate of All Saints, Knightsbridge, from 1849 until his death twenty years later. His Life of Mary Russell Mitford appeared in 1870.

[2] Robert Coates (1772–1848), Lothario in Rowes' *Fair Penitent*. For a very amusing account of Coates in the character of Romeo, see Captain Gronow's *Recollections and Anecdotes* (Smith, Elder, 1877), pp. 47–52.

Before the curtain drew up, a performer (all gemmen) came forward and thus addressed the house, Ladies, &c., "A melancholy accident has happened to the "gentleman who undertook the part of Altamont—— (here a dead stop—then—) this accident has *happened* "to *his brother*, who fell this afternoon through a "*loop-hole* into the *London Dock*, and was taken up "dead, Altamont has just entered the house, dis- "tractedly, is—now dressing ! ! ! and will appear in "five minutes" ! ! ! Such were verbatim the words of the apologist ; they were followed by a roar of laughter, and Altamont himself, who did not fall short of Coates in absurdity. Damn me, if I ever saw such a scene in my life ; the play was closed in 3rd act ; after Bob's demise, nobody would hear a syllable, he was interrupted several times before, and made speeches, every soul was in hysterics, and all the actors on his own model. You can't conceive how I longed for *you* ; your taste for the ridiculous would have been gratified to surfeit.

A farce followed in dumb-show, after Bob had been hooted from the stage, for a bawdy address he attempted to deliver between play and farce.

"Love à la mode" was damned, Coates was damned, everything was damned, and damnable.

His enacting I need not describe, you have seen him at Bath. But never did you see the *others*, never did you hear the *apology*, never did you behold the "distracted" survivor of a "brother neck-broken through a *loop-hole* in y^e^ *London Docks*."

Like George Faulkner these fellows defied burlesque. Oh, Captain ! eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor can the heart of man conceive to-night's performance.

Baron Geramb was in the stage box,[1] and Coates in

[1] Baron Geramb was a German Jew who, for some time, excited much public notice in London by the extravagance of his attire. Being very troublesome, and even menacing in demanding remuneration from Government, for a proposal he had made of engaging a body of Croat troops in the service of England, he was, in 1812, deported under the Aliens Act.

his address *nailed* the *Baron* to the infinite amusement of the audience, and the discomfiture of *Geramb*, who grew very wroth indeed.

I meant to write on other topics, but I must postpone. I can think, and talk, and dream only of these buffoons.

" 'Tis done, 'tis numbered with the things that were, " would, would it were to come " and you by my side to see it.

Heigh ho! Good-night.

Yours ever, B.

8, ST. JAMES' STREET, *December 15th*, 1811.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—You are silent, I suppose, from y^e^ same reason that George Lamb's wit in y^e^ farce said nothing.

But this awful pause gives me hopes of seeing and hearing you in " these parts."

I have been living quietly, reading Sir W. Drummond's book on the bible,[1] and seeing Kemble and Mrs. Siddons.

Yesterday Moore went over with me to Sydenham, but did not find Campbell at home. M. said he was probably at home, but " nefariously dirty," and would not be seen in a poetical pickle.

I think you would like Moore, and I should have great pleasure in bringing you together. To-morrow I dine with Rogers and go to Coleridge's Lecture; Coleridge has attacked the " Pleasures of Hope," and all other pleasures whatsoever.[2]

Cawthorn rises in y^e^ world, he talks of getting a novel of M^e^ D'Arblay's for 1000 gs. ! ! You and I must hide our diminished heads.—What are you doing? Dallas is ill, Hodgson going crazy (I had a woful letter from him yesterday, full of Phantasmagoria), Bland is half killed by his faithless Trulla, and Scrope at Cambridge full of pleasaunt mirth.

[1] *Œdipus Judaicus*, in which Sir William Drummond explained Old Testament stories as astronomical allegories. The book was published in 1811.

[2] See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 78.

Hodgson passes his Xmas at Newstead, so does Harness, *him* you don't know, he is a *Harrow* man, that will be enough for you. Sir W^m^ Ingilby I have frequently seen lately, and other returned voyagers. Bold Webster is preparing caudle for his spouse, and I am to be a Godfather. Ward has left town, and L^d^ Valentia gone with his son to Arley Hall.

The Alfred does well, but our cook has absconded in debt, and be damned to him, which has thrown the managing committee into hysterics.

I presume y^e^ papers have told of y^e^ riots in Notts, breaking of frames and heads, and out-manœuvring the military.

Joe Murray has been frightened by dreams and ghosts; it is singular that he never superstitized for seventy-six years before. All my affairs are going on very badly, and I must rebel too, if they don't mend. I shall return to London for the meeting of Parliament.

Cambridge stands where it did, but all our acquaintances are gone, or superannuated.

I have now exhausted my gossip, and will spare you for the present.

Believe me, Yours ever most truly, Μπαιρων.

8, St. James' Street, *December 17th*, 1811.

My dear Hobhouse,—Pray translate the drama; I shall print it without any translation whatever. I thought you had sent me your copies of the MS. and meant to keep the originals, for I am in need of one of the two.

S^r^ Demetrius is posed with your queries, and I would not advise you to depend on him for correctness; your notes have been regularly put into his hands, and I will press him about an answer.

You are devilish despondent, and I am not much better, but in a state of tolerable apathy as to the fate of my scribblings. Other things affect me just at present. There is an omission in the answer of the "πραγματευτῆς;" as to your verbal queries I can say nothing. Murray has the MS., queries and all.

I leave town to-morrow (19th) for Notts where the weavers are in arms, and breaking of frames; Hodgson thinks his frame will be broken amongst the rest. I hope not.

The moment my Note has passed the press you shall have the original. Cawthorn sent you a proof yesterday; I read part of it, and like it much, so did Hodgson. There was one sentence we did not understand, and I put as much in the margin.

I am perplexed with a thousand cares, all worldly, but shall return to town about the 10th of January. I am going to Notts, to be sulky for a fortnight.

From the little my notes will say, you can take freely, and improve on them as I shall be out first.

I begin to be rather alarmed as the moment of publication approaches, but must man myself.

I assure you it is by no means smooth water.

If you come to England in February, you will find me here very quiet and glad to see you.

Sir W^m^ Drummond has printed a profane book on the bible, but not published it for fear of clerical hysterics. It is all Hebrew and Chaldaic, and what not.

I must fold up this scrawl.

Yours ever, B.

8, ST. JAMES' STREET, *January 16th*, 1812.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Hodgson was with me at Newstead, and a Mr. Harness of Harrow, a mighty friend of mine, but I am sick of Harrow things.

Hodgson and myself longed for you, and drank your health daily, and I always threatened Harness with *you* (when he misbehaved) as a particular enemy to fine feelings and sentimental friendships.

Hodgson is ruined, Harry Drury is ruined, Butler ruined, and Harrow not rising. Nottingham is in a sad state, London as usual. Do leave Ireland; I fear your Catholics will find work for you, surely *you* won't fight against them. Will you?

I went down to the house, and resumed my seat

yesterday. I mean to try a speech, but have not yet determined on my subject.

I have been reviewing in the Monthly.[1] Galt is in England, has published, and is to send me his book.

I think the Monthly and Quarterly will be kind to you, and very likely the Edin. For myself, I am perplexed with weightier cares than authorship. My affairs are disordered in no small degree, but as those of everybody else seem no better, one has the consolation of being embarrassed in very good company. I am dunning in Scotland for my mother's money, and it has not yet been paid. I have been into Lancashire to no great purpose, but Newstead is to be doubled in rent directly.

I am, dear H. yrs. ever most affect[ly]. B.

[1] *Monthly Review.* In the Bodleian Library there is a copy of this Review in which George Edward Griffiths (1769–1829) has entered the initials of the authors of each article. To Byron is attributed an article on the Poems of William Robert Spencer; and another on *Neglected Genius,* by W. H. Ireland. Both articles are printed in the Appendix to vol. ii of the *Letters and Journals.*

CHAPTER III

CORRESPONDENCE WITH LADY MELBOURNE

(1812)

1812 was the *annus mirabilis* of Byron's life: the year in which he "woke one morning and found himself famous."

On Feb. 27 he made his first speech in the House of Lords, concerning which he wrote to Hodgson: "I have had many marvellous eulogies repeated to me since, in person and by proxy, from divers persons *ministerial*—yea Ministerial—as well as oppositionists! Of them I shall only mention Sir F. Burdett. *He* says it is the best speech by a *lord* since 'the *Lord* knows when,' probably from a fellow feeling in the Sentiments."

Two days later the first two cantos of *Childe Harold* were published, and raised him at one bound to the highest pinnacle of literary fame. Only some four months earlier he had come to London with but few friends: a proud and shy youth who had not set his foot within the precincts of select London Society. From this time forward he became the most welcomed and sought after member of that Society.

One of the houses, to which he first found the entrée was Melbourne House, and it was here that he formed two close attachments which were destined to influence his whole life. Elizabeth Lady Melbourne, sister of Sir Ralph Milbanke and wife of Sir Peniston Lamb, who had been created Viscount Melbourne in 1770, was the mother of William Lamb and mother-in-law of

Lady Caroline Lamb. It is unnecessary to repeat here all the story of the infatuated attachment of Lady Caroline to Byron, the details of which will be found fully set forth in the *Letters and Journals*.

Lady Melbourne was at this time 62 years of age. Of her Byron wrote, "If she had been a few years younger, what a fool she would have made of me had she thought it worth her while—and I should have lost a most valuable and agreeable friend."

The letters which follow, and are now published for the first time, throw a flood of new light on Lord Byron's friendship with Lady Melbourne and of the powerful influence which she exercised over him. My reason for printing them in full is stated in the preface to this book, and it is much to be regretted that only one or two of Lady Melbourne's complementary letters to Byron now exist. It was mainly owing to Lady Melbourne that Byron's ill-fated marriage with her niece took place.

At the date when this correspondence begins, Byron had become alienated from Lady Caroline Lamb, who had been persuaded to accompany her mother, Lady Bessborough, to Ireland.

Lady Melbourne died in 1818, and it is strange that in the correspondence of that year included in these volumes we find only one passing allusion to her (Vol. II. 82).[1]

Byron to Lady Melbourne

CHELTENHAM, *September 10th*, 1812.

DEAR LADY MELBOURNE,—I presume you have heard and will not be sorry to hear *again*, that *they* are safely deposited in Ireland,[2] and that the sea rolls between you and *one* of your torments; the other you see is still

[1] His death is alluded to in a letter to Mr. Murray, 23 Apr. 1818, *Letters and Journals*.

[2] Lady Bessborough and Lady Caroline Lamb.

at your elbow. Now (if you are as sincere as I sometimes almost dream) you will not regret to hear, that I wish this to end, and it certainly shall not be renewed on my part.[1] It is not that I love another, but loving at all is quite out of my way; I am tired of being a fool, and when I look back on the waste of time, and the destruction of all my plans last winter by this last romance, I am—what I ought to have been long ago. It is true from early habit, one must make love mechanically, as one swims. I was once very fond of both, but now as I never swim, unless I tumble into the water, I don't make love till almost obliged, though I fear *that* is not the shortest way out of the troubled waves with which in such accidents we must struggle.

But I will say no more on this topic, as I am not sure of my ground, and you can easily outwit me, as you always hitherto have done.

To-day I have had a letter from Lord Holland, wishing me to write for the opening theatre,[2] but as all Grub Street seems engaged in the contest, I have no ambition to enter the lists, and have thrown my few ideas into the fire. I never risk *rivalry* in anything, you see the very *lowest*, as in this case, discourages me, from a sort of mixed feeling, I don't know if it be *pride*, but *you* will say it certainly is not *modesty*. I suppose your friend Twiss will be *one*.[3] I hear there are five hundred, and I wish him success. I really think he would do it well, but few men who have any character to lose, would risk it in an anonymous scramble, for the sake of their own feelings.

I have written to Lord H. to thank him and decline the chance.

[1] Byron's liaison with Lady Caroline Lamb.

[2] Drury Lane.

[3] Horace Twiss (1787–1849), a wit and politician. In 1811 he was a barrister, Inner Temple, and contributed squibs to the papers. He went into Parliament and became Under-Secretary of War and the Colonies.

Betty is performing here,[1] I fear very ill. His figure is that of a hippopotamus, his face like the bull and mouth on the panels of a heavy coach, his arms like fins fattened out of shape, his voice the gargling of an alderman with the quinsy, and his acting altogether ought to be natural, for it certainly is like nothing that *Art* has ever yet exhibited on the stage.

Will you honour me with a line at your leisure? On the most *indifferent* subjects you please, and believe me ever,

Yours very affectionately, B.

CHELTENHAM, *September 13th*, 1812.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—The end of Lady B[essborough]'s letter shall be the beginning of mine. "For Heaven's sake do not lose your hold on him." Pray don't, *I* repeat, and assure you it is a very firm one, "but the yoke is easy, and the burthen is light," to use one of my scriptural phrases.

So far from being ashamed of being governed like Lord Delacour or any *other Lord* or *master*, I am always but too happy to find one to regulate or misregulate me, and I am as docile as a dromedary, and can bear almost as much. Will you undertake me? If you are sincere (which I still a little hesitate in believing), give me but time, let *hers*[2] retain her in Ireland—the "gayer" the better. I want her just to be sufficiently gay that I may have enough to bear me out on my own

[1] William Betty, an actor, called "the young Roscius," was born in 1791. He played Hamlet in 1803 at Dublin. He entered as a fellow-commoner of Christ's College, Cambridge, in 1809, but returned to the stage in 1812. He had great vogue in his day, but his career was brief and he finally retired in 1824, in his thirty-fourth year. Byron, who saw him in 1812, pronounced his acting utterly inadequate to the requirements of Covent Garden. He says that "his figure is fat, his features flat, his voice unmanageable, his action ungraceful." (*Letters and Journals*, ii. 142.)

[2] Lady Caroline Lamb. There are constant references to her in the following letters, and readers who desire to know more about her associations with Byron are referred to *Letters and Journals*, ii. 114, note, 135, note, and Appendix III.

part. Grant me but till December, and if I do not disenchant the Dulcinea and Don Quichotte, both, then I must attack the windmills, and leave the land in quest of adventures. In the meantime I must, and do write the greatest absurdities to keep her "gay," and the more so because the last epistle informed me that "eight guineas, a mail, and a packet could soon bring her to London," a threat which immediately called forth a letter worthy of the Grand Cyrus or the Duke of York, or any other hero of Madame Scudery or Mrs. Clarke.

Poor Lady Bessborough! with her hopes and her fears. In fact it is no jest for her, or indeed any of us. I must let you into one little secret—*her* folly half did this. At the commencement she piqued that "vanity" (which it would be the vainest thing in the world to deny) by telling me she was certain I was not beloved, "that I was only led on for the sake of &c., &c." This raised a devil between us, which now will only be laid, I really do believe, in the *Red* Sea; I made no answer, but determined, not to *pursue*, for pursuit it was not, but to sit still, and in a week after I was convinced—not that [Caroline] loved me, for I do not believe in the existence of what is called Love—but that any other man in my situation would have believed that he was loved.

Now, my dear Lady M., you are all out as to my real sentiments. I was, am, and shall be, I fear, attached to another, one to whom I have never said much, but have never lost sight of, and the whole of this interlude has been the result of circumstances which it may be too late to regret. Do you suppose that at my *time* of *life*, were I so very *far* gone, that I should not be in Ireland, or at least have followed into Wales, as it was hinted was *expected*. Now they have crossed the Channel, I feel anything but regret. I told you in my two last, that I did not "like any other, &c., &c." I deceived you and myself in saying so; there was, and is one whom I wished to marry, had not this affair intervened, or had not some occurrences rather

discouraged me. When our drama was "rising" ("I'll be d—d if it falls off," I may say with Sir Fretful), in the 5th Act,[1] it was no time to hesitate. I had made up my mind to bear the consequences of my own folly; honour, pity, and a kind of affection all forbade me to shrink, but now if I can *honorably* be off, if *you* are not deceiving me, and if she does not take some accursed step to precipitate her own inevitable fall (if not with me, with some less lucky successor)—if these impossibilities can be got over, all will be well. If not—she will travel.

As I have said so much, I may as well say all. The woman I mean is Miss Milbanke; I know nothing of her fortune, and I am told that her father is ruined, but my own will, when my Rochdale arrangements are closed, be sufficient for both. My debts are not £25,000, and the deuce is in it, if with R[ochdale] and the surplus of N[ewstead], I could not contrive to be as independent as half the peerage.

I know little of her, and have not the most distant reason to suppose that I am at all a favourite in that quarter. But I never saw a woman whom I *esteemed* so much. But that chance is gone, and there's an end.

Now, my dear Lady M., I am completely in your power. I have not deceived you as to —— [C. L.]. I hope you will not deem it vanity, when I soberly say that it would have been want of gallantry, though the acme of virtue, if I had played the Scipio on this occasion. If through your means, or any means, I can be free, or at least change my fetters, my regard and admiration would not be increased, but my gratitude would. In the meantime, it is by no means unfelt for what you have already done.

To Lady B[essborough] I could not say all this, for she would with the best intentions make the most absurd use of it. What a miserable picture does her letter present of this daughter! She seems

[1] Sheridan's *Critic*.

afraid to know her, and, blind herself, writes in such a manner as to open the eyes of all others.

I am still here in Holland's house, quiet and alone, without any wish to add to my acquaintances. Your departure was, I assure you, much more regretted than that of any of your lineals or collaterals, so do not you go to Ireland, or I shall follow you o'er "flood and fen," a complete Ignis fatuus—that is *I*, the epithet will not apply to you, so we will divide the expression; you would be the *light*, and I the *fool*.

I send you back the letter, and this fearful ream of my own. Lady Caroline is suspicious about our counterplots, and I am obliged to be as treacherous as Talleyrand, but remember *that treachery* is *truth* to you; I write as rarely as I can, but when I do, I must lie like George Rose. Your name I never mention when I can help it; and all my amatory tropes and figures are exhausted.

I have a glimmering of hope. I *had* lost it—it is renewed—all depends on it; her worst enemy could not wish her such a fate as *now* to be thrown back upon me.

Yours ever most truly, B.

P.S.—DEAR LADY M.,—Don't think me careless. My correspondence since I was sixteen has not been of a nature to allow of any trust except to a lock and key, and I have of late been doubly guarded. The few letters of yours, and all others in case of the worst, shall be sent back or burnt. Surely after returning the one with *Mr. L.'s message*,[1] you will hardly suspect me of wishing to take any advantage; *that* was the only important one in behalf of my own interests. Think me bad if you please, but not *meanly* so. Lady B.'s under another cover accompanies this.

CHELTENHAM, *September* 15*th*, 1812.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—"If I were looking in your face, entre les deux yeux," I know not whether I should find "frankness or truth," but certainly something which

[1] William Lamb.

looks quite as well if not better than either, and whatever it may be, I would not have it changed for any other expression; as it has defied time, no wonder it should perplex *me*.—"Manage her!" it is impossible, and as to friendship—no—it must be broken off at once, and all I have left is to take some step which will make her hate me effectually, for she must be in extremes.

What you state however is to be dreaded; besides, she presumes upon the weakness and affection of all about her, and the very confidence and kindness which would break or reclaim a good heart, merely lead her own farther from deserving them. Were this but secure, you would find yourself mistaken in me. I speak from experience; except in one solitary instance, three months have ever cured me. Take an example: in the autumn of 1809 in the Mediterranean I was seized with an *everlasting* passion,[1] considerably more violent on my part than this has ever been—everything was settled—and we (the *we* of that day) were to set off for the Friuli: but, lo! the Peace spoilt everything, by putting this in possession of the French, and some particular occurrences in the interim, determined me to go to Constantinople. However we were to meet next year at a certain time; though I told my *amica* there was no time like the present, and that I could not answer for the future. She trusted to her power, and I at the moment had certainly much greater doubts of her than myself. A year sped, and on my return downwards I found at Smyrna and Athens despatches, requiring the performance of this "bon billet qu' à la Chatre," [sic] and telling me that one of us had returned to the spot on purpose. But things had altered, as I foresaw, and I proceeded very leisurely, not arriving

[1] Mrs. Spencer Smith. Hobhouse, in an unpublished letter to his sister, thus describes the Florence of *Childe Harold*. "She is a pretty figure, and has a pretty face, fair and smiling; of an age about twenty-eight, but looking very young for her years. She plays and sings well; talks French, Italian and German—her native language—perfectly, and English very well indeed. My friend Byron fell in love with her."

till some months after, pretty sure that in the interim my idol was in no want of worshippers.

But she *was* there, and we met at the Palace. The Governor (the most accommodating of all possible chief magistrates) was kind enough to leave us to come to the most diabolical of explanations. It was in the dog-days, during a sirocco (I almost perspire now with the thoughts of it), during the intervals of an intermittent fever (my love had also intermitted with my malady), and I certainly feared the ague and my passion would both return in full force.

I however got the better of both, and she sailed up the Adriatic and I down to the Straits. I had, *certes*, a good deal to contend against, for the lady (who was a *select* friend of the Queen of Naples) had something to gain in a few points and nothing to lose in *reputation*, and was a woman perfectly mistress of herself and every art of intrigue, personal or political—not at all in love, but very able to persuade me that she was so, and sure that I should make a most *convenient* and complaisant fellow-traveller. She is now, I am told, writing her memoirs at Vienna, in which I shall cut a very indifferent figure; and nothing survives of this most ambrosial amour, which made me on one occasion risk my life,[1] and on another almost drove me mad, but a few Duke of York*ish* letters and certain baubles, which I dare swear by this time have decorated the hands of half Hungary and all Bohemia. Cosi finiva la musica.

CHELTENHAM, *September 18th*, 1812.

MY DEAR LADY MELBOURNE,—I only wish you thought your influence worth a "*boast*," I should ask, when it is the highest compliment paid to myself. To you it would be more, for (besides the little value of the thing) you have seen enough to convince you how easily I am governed by anyone's *presence*, but *you* would be obeyed even in absence. All persons in this situation are so, from having too much *heart*, or too little head, one or

[1] An allusion to his quarrel at Malta with the General's A.D.C. Nothing came of the challenge (see p. 6).

both. Set mine down according to your calculations. You and yours seem to me much the same as the Ottoman family to the faithful; they frequently change their rulers, but never the reigning race. I am perfectly convinced if I fell in love with a woman of Thibet, she would turn out an *emigrée cousine* of some of you.

You ask, "Am I sure of myself?" and I answer no, but *you* are, which I take to be a much better thing. Miss M[ilbanke] I admire because she is a clever woman, an amiable woman, and of high blood, for I have still a few Norman and Scotch inherited prejudices on the last score, were I to marry. As to *love*, that is done in a week (provided the lady has a reasonable share); besides, marriage goes on better with esteem and confidence than romance, and she is quite pretty enough to be loved by her husband, without being so glaringly beautiful as to attract too many rivals. She always reminds me of "Emma" in the modern Griselda,[1] and whomever I *may* marry, that is the woman I would wish to *have married*. It is odd enough that my acquaintance with Caroline commenced with a confidence on my part about your niece; C. herself (as I have often told her) was *then* not at all to my taste, nor I (and I may believe her) to hers, and we shall end probably as we began. However, if after all "it is decreed on high," that, like James the fatalist, I *must* be hers, she shall be *mine* as long as it pleases her, and the circumstances under which she becomes so, will at least make me devote my life to the vain attempt of reconciling her to herself. Wretched as it would render me, she should never know it; the sentence once past, I could never restore that which she had lost, but all the reparation I could make should be made, and the cup drained to the very dregs by myself, so that its bitterness passed from her.

In the meantime, till it *is* irrevocable, I must and may fairly endeavour to extricate both from a situation which, from our total want of all but selfish considerations, has brought us to the brink of the gulf.

[1] Miss Edgeworth's novel, published in 1804.

Before I sink I will at least have a *swim* for it, though I wish with all my heart it was the Hellespont instead, or that I could cross *this* as easily as I did y^e^ other. One reproach I cannot escape. Whatever happens hereafter, *she* will charge it on me, and so shall I, and I fear that

> "The first step or error none e'er could recall,
> And the woman once fallen for ever must fall;
> Pursue to the last the career she begun,
> And be *false* unto *many*, as *faithless* to *one*." [1]

Forgive one stanza of my own sad rhymes; you know I never did inflict any upon you before, nor will again.

What think you of Lady Bessborough's last? She is losing those brilliant hopes expressed in the former epistle. I have written three letters to Ireland and cannot compass more, the last to Lady B. herself, in which I never mentioned Lady C.'s name nor yours (if I recollect aright), nor alluded to either. It is an odd thing to say, but I am sure Lady B. will be a little provoked, if *I* am the first to change, for, like the Governor of Tilbury Fort, although "the Countess is resolved," the mother *intenerisce un poco*, and doubtless will expect her daughter to be adored (like an Irish lease) for a term of 99 years. I say it again, that happy as she must and will be to have it broken off *anyhow*, she will hate me if *I* don't break my heart; now is it not so? Laugh—but answer me truly.

I am sorry that Caroline sends you extracts from my epistles. I deserve it for the passage I showed once to you, but remember that was in the *outset*, and when everything said or sung was exculpatory and innocent and what not. Moreover, recollect what absurdities a man must write to his idol, and that "garbled extracts" prove nothing without the context; for my own part I declare that I recollect no such proposal of an *epistolary truce*, and the gambols at divers houses of entertainment with y^e^ express, &c.,

[1] This is part of a poem, printed in Hobhouse's *Miscellany*.

tend y^e^ rather to confirm my statement. But I cannot be sure, or answerable for all I have said or unsaid, since "Jove" himself (some with Mrs. Malaprop would read *Job*) has forgotten to "laugh at our perjuries." I am certain that I tremble for the trunkfuls of my contradictions, since, like a minister or a woman, she may one day exhibit them in some magazine or some quartos of villainous memories written in her 7000th love-fit.

Now, dear Lady M., my *paper* spares you.

Believe me, with great regard, Yours ever, B.

P.S.—In your last you say you are "surrounded by fools;" Why then "motley's the only wear:"

> "Oh that I were a fool, a motley fool;
> I am ambitious of a motley coat."

Well, will you answer, "Thou shalt have one."

> Chi va piano va sano,
> E chi va sano va lontano.

My progress has been "lontano," but alas! y^e^ "sano" and "piano" are past praying for.

CHELTENHAM, *September* 21*st*, 1812.

DEAR LADY M.—I have had at last a letter offering a kind of release, and demanding an answer to a curious question, viz., "whether I could live without her?" I began an answer; more particularly as I have not written these three weeks, but bewildering myself in the course of the first sentence, threw it into the fire and shall write no more. They, and she in particular, have been extremely gay, to which I can have no objection whatever, the best proof of which is that I have not expressed any; Lady B. I rather think will encourage some other connexion or connexions as a temporary expedient. Poor soul! her *remedy* would yield me *eventually* ample revenge, if I felt any resentment against her, which indeed I do not.

I think, my dear Lady M., you must agree with me that —— will fulfil y^e^ prophecy in my last, and would, had the present object of your fears never existed. I have not written because it would only lead to endless recapitulation, recrimination, *bother*ation (take a Kilkenny phrase), accusation, and all -ations but *salvation.*

Before I became candidate for the distinguished honour of nepotism to your Ladyship, it will be as well for me to know that your niece [1] is not already disposed of to a better bidder; if not, I should like it of all things, were it only for the pleasure of calling you *aunt*! and soliciting your benediction.

My only objection (supposing of course that y^e^ lady's was got over) would be to my *mamma*,[2] from whom I have already by instinct imbibed a mortal aversion. I am sadly out of practice in this sort of *suit*, and shall make some villainous blunder; but I will try, and if this fails, anything else.

Your letter arrived just in time to prevent me from setting off for Rochdale, where I was going to purchase the great tithes of 12,000 acres of waste which cannot be enclosed without my permission; and as enclosure alone makes the said tithes valuable, and the Archbishop wishes to sell them, and I have hitherto held out against enclosing with the view of obtaining them, my agent is gone instead, which will do quite as well, and save me a tiresome journey.

C.'s last letter is full of reproaches, which I don't feel at all disposed to controvert nor to recriminate; but how could anything of this kind be carried without 10,000 perfidies, particularly one so vilely perplexed in all its branches! I cannot write; I would not seem jealous, and it would be under *all circumstances*

[1] Elizabeth Lady Melbourne was the only daughter of Sir Ralph Milbanke, fifth Baronet, of Halnaby, Co. Yorks, and sister of Sir Ralph Milbanke, whose only daughter, Anne Isabella (commonly called Annabella), here referred to, in 1815 was married to Lord Byron.

[2] Lady Milbanke.

improper to appear indifferent, and—and—Oh I am in a diabolical dilemma, my great hope rests on the Kilkenny theatricals; some hero of the sock, some Gracioso of the buskin will perhaps electrify poor Lady Bessborough and transfer her alarms to an Irish Roscius.

If I marry, positively it must be in three weeks; in the meantime I am falling in love as much as I can with a new Juliet who sets off for London in the long coach to-morrow to appear on (not in) Covent Garden; with an Italian songstress; with a Welsh seamstress; with my agent's wife and daughter; and a picture of Buonaparte's Empress, who looks as fair and foolish as she is dark and diabolical.

Now, my dear Lady M., if I could not frank my letters I should feel for you; as it is, if they *wake* you in the morning it is good for y^r^ health, and if they make you sleep at night—still better.

Ever yrs. most affect^ly^ and truly, B.

P.S.—A letter of mine to you (before the voyage [1]) was found by her, Heaven knows where, and on this she has again expatiated—*n'importe*—but *who* was careless? *Ma tante*, methinks that reproach was somewhat misplaced. If you left it in y^e^ way on purpose, it had a blessed effect—it is but adding another *winding* to our *labyrinth*. She quotes from it passages which I recollect. How could you, Lady M., how could you "wear a pocket with a hole in it!!"

September 25th, 1812.

My dear Lady M.,—It would answer no purpose to write a syllable on any subject whatever, and neither accelerate nor retard what we wish to prevent. She must be left to chance; conjugal affection and the Kilkenny theatricals are equally in your favour. For my part it is an accursed business, *towards* nor *from* which I shall not move a single step; if she throws

[1] To Ireland.

herself upon me, "cosi finiva;" if not, the sooner it is over the better. From this moment I have done with it; only before she returns allow me to know, that I may act accordingly. But there will be nothing to fear before that time, as if a woman, and a selfish woman also, would not fill up the vacancy with the first comer! As to Annabella,[1] she requires time and all the cardinal virtues, and in the interim I am a little verging towards one who demands neither, and saves me besides the trouble of marrying, by being married already. She besides does not speak English, and to me nothing but Italian—a great point, for from certain coincidences the very sound of that language is music to me, and she has black eyes, and *not* a very white skin, and reminds me of many in the Archipelago I wished to forget, and makes me forget what I ought to remember, all which are against me. I only wish she did not swallow so much supper—chicken wings, sweetbreads, custards, peaches and port wine; a woman should never be seen eating or drinking, unless it be *lobster salad* and *champagne*, the only truly feminine and becoming viands. I recollect imploring one lady not to eat more than a fowl at a sitting, without effect, and I have never yet made a single proselyte to Pythagoras.[2]

Now a word to yourself—a much more pleasing topic than any of the preceding. I have no very high opinion of your sex, but when I do see a woman superior not only to all her own but to most of ours, I worship her in proportion as I despise the rest.

And when I know that men of the first judgment and the most distinguished abilities have entertained and do entertain an opinion which my own humble observation, without any great effort of discernment, has enabled me to confirm on the same subject, you will not blame me for following the example of my elders and betters, and

[1] Miss Milbanke.

[2] I.e., to live upon the purest and most innocent food. He forbade his disciples to eat flesh.

admiring you certainly as much as you ever were admired. My only regret is that the very awkward circumstances in which we are placed prevent and will prevent the improvement of an acquaintance which I now almost regret having made, but recollect, whatever happens, that the loss of it must give me more pain than even the *precious acquisition* (and this is saying *much*) which will occasion that loss.

L[d] Jersey has reinvited me to M[iddleton] for the 4th Oct., and I will be there if possible; in the meantime, whatever step you take to break off this affair has my full concurrence. But *what* you wished me to write, would be a little too indifferent; and *that* now would be an insult, and I am much unwilling to hurt her feelings now than ever (not from the mere apprehension of a disclosure in her wrath), but I have always felt that one who has given up much has a claim upon *me* (at least—whatever she deserves from others) for every respect that she may not feel her own degradation, and this is the reason that I have not written at all lately lest some expression might be misconstrued by her.

When the lady herself begins the quarrel, and adopts a new "*Cortejo*," then my conscience is comforted. She has not written to me for some days, which is either a very bad or very good omen.[1] Y[rs] ever, B.

I observe that C. in her late epistles lays peculiar stress upon her powers of attraction, upon W.'s attachment,[2] etc., and by way of enhancing the extreme value of her regards, tells me that she "could make any one in love with her"—an amiable accomplishment, but unfortunately a little too general to be valuable. For was there ever yet a woman, not absolutely disgusting, who could not say or do the same thing? Any woman can *make* a man in *love* with her; show me one who can *keep* him so! *You* perhaps *can* show me such a woman, but I have not seen her for these—*three weeks*.

[1] Lady Melbourne's answer is printed in Lady Airlie's book, *In Whig Society*, p. 143.

[2] William Lamb, whom Lady Caroline married in June 1805.

[CHELTENHAM] *September 28th*, 1812.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—The *non*-mention of Miss R. certainly looks very suspicious, but your correspondent has fallen into a mistake in which I am sure neither y^e^ lady nor myself could possibly join. Since your departure I have hardly entered a single house; the Rawdons and the Oxfords and a family named Macleod are the only persons I know. Lady C. Rawdon gave me a general retainer to her box at the theatre, where I generally go, which has probably produced the surmise you mention.

Miss R. has always been a mighty favourite with me, because she is unaffected, very accomplished, and lived amongst the Greeks of Venice and Trieste, consequently well versed in many topics which are common to her and me, and would be very stupid to anyone else; I moreover think her very pretty, though not at all in the style of beauty which I most admire; but she *waltzes*, and is for many reasons the very last woman on earth I should covet (unless she were "my neighbour's wife," and then the breaking a commandment would go far in her behalf); nor do I think that our acquaintance has extended even to a common flirtation; besides, *her* views are in another quarter, and so most assuredly are mine.

I never heard of the report L^dy^ M[ilbanke] *starts* from, and I am sure you will do me the justice to believe I never dreamed of such a thing, and, had I heard it, should have disbelieved such nonsense, as I do now. I am not at all ashamed of my own bias towards your niece, nor should have the least objection to its being posted up at Charing Cross, though I should never wish to hazard a refusal.

I certainly did wish to cultivate her acquaintance, but Caroline told me she was engaged to Eden, so did several others; Mrs. L. [Mrs. George Lamb ?] *her* great friend, was of opinion (and upon my honour I believe her) that she neither did, could, nor ought to *like* me; and was, moreover, certain

that E.[1] would be the *best husband* in the world and I its *antithesis*; and certainly her word deserved to be taken for *one* of *us*.

Under all these circumstances, and others I need not recapitulate, was I to hazard my heart with a woman I was very much inclined to like, but at the same time sure could be nothing to me? And then you know my unfortunate manner, which always leads me to talk too much to some particular person, or not at all.

At present, as I told you in my last, I am rather captivated with a woman, not very beautiful, but very much in the style I like: dark and lively, and neither more nor less than "La Pucilla," of the opera, whom I see sometimes at Col. Macleod's; and whenever Italian is spoken, I always strive to repair y^e^ inroads want of practice make in my memory of that dearest of all languages. She is very fond of her husband, which is all the better, as thus, if a woman is attached to her husband, how much more will she naturally like one who is *not* her husband—in the same manner as a woman does not always dislike a man who is violently in love with another, arguing, says Fielding, in this way —"If Mr. — loves Mrs. or Miss — so *much*, how much more will he love *me*, who am so far the superior, not only of Mrs. —— or Miss——, but of all other Mistresses or Misses whatsoever?"

You can hardly say I do not trust you when I tell you all these fooleries. *At this moment* another *express* from Ireland!!! More scenes!—this woman[2] will never rest till she has made us all what she and I at least deserve. I must now write to her. I wrote L^dy^ B. a letter, which she was fool enough to show her, though I addressed it under cover to L^d^ B. that she might not; *her* name was not mentioned in it, but it was easy to discern by the contents that I was not eager for their return.

[1] The Honble. George Eden, who succeeded his father as Lord Auckland in 1814.

[2] Lady C. Lamb.

6 *o'clock*.—So, having remanded Mr. O'Brien (the Irish Cupid on whose wings this despatch was wafted) back to Waterford, I resume, merely to say that I see nothing but marriage, and a *speedy one*, can save me. If your niece is obtainable,[1] I should prefer her ; if not, the very first woman who does not look as if she would spit in my face, amongst the variety of spouses provided by your *correspondents*, etc. I am infinitely amused with my Camerieros (who has lived with me since I was ten years old, and been over the Mediterranean, a prey to all the mosquitoes and siroccos in the Levant, in my service) ; he is eternally sounding the praises of a *Dutch widow* now here, of great riches and rotundity, and very pretty withal, whose Abigail has made a conquest of him (a married man), and they have agreed how infinitely convenient it would be, that as *they* can't marry, their master and mistress should.

We shall meet at Middleton, I hope, mia carissima *Zia*. I wish my nepotism was well over. I do not care at all about Sir R[alph Milbanke]'s involvements, for I think that with the command of floating capital which my late N[ewstead] business has put in my power, some arrangement might be made with *him* that might be advantageous to both, supposing this marriage could be effected. When they come here I don't see how we are to meet, for I go nowhere. Does Annabella *waltz* ? It is an odd question, but a very essential point with me. I wish somebody could say at once that I wish to propose to her ; but I have great doubts of *her*—it rests with herself entirely.

Believe me, dear L^dy^ M., *Ever* y^rs^ most affectionately,

B.

P.S.—I have written you the vilest and most egotistical letter that ever was scribbled ; but Cara's courier made me feel *selfish*, and you will pardon my catching the infection.

Your apology for L^dy^ M[ilbanke's] appellation was needless ; though all my rhymes have got for me is a

[1] Miss Milbanke.

villanous nickname. I know her, but latterly we *act*, I suppose, upon this most stupid rumour. I don't know how I shall assuage this same craving.

I shall be like Comus and the Lady. I am sadly out of practice lately; except a few sighs to a gentlewoman at supper, who was too much occupied with y^e^ *fourth* wing of her *second* chicken to mind anything that was not material.

Some time between the 1st October and the 17th of that month in 1812, Byron, through an intermediary, proposed marriage to Miss Milbanke and was refused. In a letter written by Byron to Miss Milbanke [see *Letters and Journals*, iii., 397), it appears that the proposal was made through Lady Melbourne. It is evident that Lady Melbourne, upon receiving Miss Milbanke's answer, wrote to Byron begging him not to show any resentment on account of Miss Milbanke's refusal to marry him. The following letter is evidently Byron's reply:

Byron to Lady Melbourne

Beginning not found, probably Sept. 1812.

It is not *I* who am to be feared now but *her* with her Pique. I need not repeat that I lay no stress upon attachments, two balls and *one* admirer will settle the last to her heart's content. I do not at all know how to deal with her, because she is unlike anyone else. My letters have not reached her in Ireland, and she complains on that account: the fault is not mine. I have written twice but the Post has been negligent, or Lady B. *diligent*, and this will make her do some silly thing.

If we are not enemies before they return, you will inform me when they are expected, and I will be out of the way unless something occurs to make that unnecessary.

I shall not write any more to Ireland, if I can avoid it, in fact I have said and unsaid and resaid till I am exhausted and *you* will think that I have transferred my tediousness and my letters from her to you. I would marry before they return: this would settle it at once, but I am new to that business, never having made a proposal in my life (though I was brought up to be married to one who was older than myself and could not *wait*), and never married except by the month in the Levant, where I was divorced twenty times from those who had been divorced twenty times before and since, and are now widowed again I dare say. Besides, I do not know a single gentlewoman who would venture upon me, but that seems the only rational outlet from this adventure.

I admired your niece but she is engaged to Eden; besides, she deserves a better heart than mine. What shall I do—shall I advertise?

I thank you so much for your letters on all topics different or indifferent—they are most welcome. Cheltenham is a desert, nothing but the waters detain me here. One word to break the monotony of my days with delight.

Ever yours most truly, B.

CHELTENHAM, *October 17th*, 1812.

"*Cut* her!" my dear L^{dy} M. Marry—Mahomet forbid! I am sure we shall be better friends than before, and if I am not embarrassed by all this, I cannot see for the soul of me why *she* should. Assure *her*, con tutto rispetto, that the subject shall never be renewed in any shape whatever, and assure yourself, my carissima (not *Zia*; what then shall it be? Choose your *own* name) that were it not for this *embarras* with C[aroline]. I would much rather remain as I am. I have had so very little intercourse with the fair philosopher, that if when we meet, I should endeavour to improve our acquaintance, she must not *mistake* me, and assure her I never shall mistake her. I *never did*, you will allow,

and God knows whether I am right or not; but I do think I am not very apt to think myself encouraged.

She is perfectly right in every point of view, and during the slight suspense, I felt something very like remorse, for sundry reasons, not at all connected with C., nor with any occurrences since I knew you, or her, or hers. Finding I must marry, however, on *that* score I should have preferred a woman of birth and talents; but such a woman was not at all to blame for not preferring me; my *heart* never had an opportunity of being much interested in the business, further than that I should have very much liked to be *your relation.*

And now to conclude, like L[d] Toppington, "I have lost a thousand women in my time, but never had the ill-manners to quarrel with them for such a trifle."

Talking of addresses puts me in mind of my *Address*,[1] which has been murdered (I hear) in the delivery, and mauled (I see) in the newpapers; and you don't tell me whether you heard it recited. I almost wish you may not, if this be the case.

I am asked to L[d] O[xford]'s and L[d] Harrowby's, and am wavering between the two. I cannot sufficiently thank you for all the trouble you have taken on my account; the interest with which you honour me, would amply repay for fifty vexations, even if I felt any, and perhaps I do, without knowing it; but I can't tell how it is, but I think C[aroline] may be managed now, as well as if the whole had taken place, if she has either *pride* or *principle*, because she may now be convinced with a *little* dexterity, at *her return*, that I am most anxious to end everything—added to which the present *denial* will lessen me in her estimation as an *article* of *value*, and her vanity will help marvellously to her conversion.

You talk of my "religion;" *that* rests between man and his Maker, and to Him only can my feelings be known; for A[nnabella], it had been sufficient not to find me an "infidel" in anything else.

[1] Drury Lane Address, spoken on Saturday, 10 Oct. 1812.

I must now conclude, for I am pressed by the post; pray let me hear from you often, and believe me ever, my dear L^dy M., Y^rs most affectionately, B.

October 18th, 1812.

My dear Lady M.,—Of A[nnabella] I have little to add, but I do not regret what has passed; the report alluded to had hurt her feelings, and she has now regained her tranquillity by the refutation to her own satisfaction without disturbing mine. This was but fair, and was not unexpected by me; all things considered, perhaps it could not have been better. I think of her nearly as I did. The specimen you send me is more favourable to her talents than her discernment, and much *too indulgent* to the subject she has chosen; in some points the resemblance is very exact, but you have not sent me the whole (I imagine) by the abruptness of both beginning and end.

I am glad that your opinion coincides with mine on the subject of her abilities and her excellent qualities; in both these points she is singularly fortunate. Still there is something of the *woman* about her; her *preferring* that the letter to you should be sent forward to me, *per essempio*, appears as if, though she would not encourage, she was not disgusted with being admired. I also may hazard a conjecture that an *answer* addressed to *herself* might not have been displeasing, but of this you are the best judge from actual observation. I cannot, however, see the necessity of its being forwarded, unless I was either to admire the composition, or reply to y^e contents. *One* I certainly do, the other would merely lead to mutual compliments, very sincere but somewhat *tedious*.

By the bye, what two famous letters *your own* are! I never saw such traits of discernment, observation of character, knowledge of your *own sex* and sly concealment of your *knowledge* of the *foibles* of *ours*, than [*sic*] in these epistles; and so that I preserve you *always* as a friend, and *sometimes* as a correspondent (the oftener the better), believe me, my dear L^dy M., I shall

regret nothing but—the week we passed at Middleton, till I can enjoy such another.

Now for Caroline. Your name was never mentioned or hinted at. The passage was nearly as follows:—"I know from the *best* authority, your *own*, that your time has passed in a very different manner, nor do I object to it; amuse yourself, but leave me *quiet*. What would you have? I go nowhere, I see no one, I mix with no society, I write when it is proper; these perpetual causeless caprices are equally selfish and absurd, etc. etc." and so on in answer to her description of her *lonely lovelorn condition!!!* much in the same severer style. And now this must end. If she persists I will leave the country. I shall enter into no explanations, write no epistles, softening or reverse, nor will I meet her if it can be avoided, and certainly never but in society. The sooner she is apprised of this the better; but with one so totally devoid of all conduct it is difficult to decide. I have no objection to her knowing what passed about A[nnabella], if it would have any good effect; nor do I wish it to be concealed, even from others, or the world in general; my vanity will not be piqued by its development, and though it was not accepted, I am not at all ashamed of my admiration of the amiable *Mathematician*.

I did not reproach C. for "*her behaviour*," but the misrepresentation of it, and her suspicions of mine. Why tell me she was *dying* instead of *dancing*, when I had much rather hear she was acting, as she in fact acted—viz. like any other person in good health, tolerable society and high spirits? In short I am not her lover, and would rather not be her friend, though I never can, nor will be her enemy. If it can be ended, let it be without my interference. I will have nothing more to do with it. Her letters (all but one about *L^d Clare* unanswered, and the answer to *that* strictly confined to his concerns, except a hint on vanity at the close) are filled with the most ridiculous egotism: "*how* the Duke's mob observed her, *how* the boys followed her, the women caressed and the men admired, and *how*

many lovers were all sacrificed to this brilliant fit of constancy." Who wants it forsooth, or expects it, after sixteen? Can't she take example from me? Do I embarrass myself about A.? or the fifty B., C., D., E., F., G., H.'s, &c. &c., that have preceded her in cruelty, or kindness (the latter always the greater plague)? Not I; and really, *sans phrase*, I think *my loss* is the most *considerable*.

I hear L^dy Holland is ill, I hope *not seriously*. L^d O. went to-day, and I am still here with some idea of proceeding either to Herefordshire [1] or to L^d Harrowby's, and one notion of being obliged to go to London to meet my agent.

Pray let me hear from you; I am so provoked at the thought that our acquaintance may be interrupted by the old phantasy.

I had and have twenty thousand things to say, and I trust as many to hear, but somehow our conversations never come to a clear conclusion.

I thank you again for your efforts with my Princess of Parallelograms,[2] who has puzzled you more than the Hypothenuse; in her character she has not forgotten "*Mathematics*," wherein I used to praise her cunning. Her proceedings are quite rectangular, or rather we are two parallel lines prolonged to infinity side by side, but never to meet. Say what you please for, or of me, and I will swear it.

Good even, my dear L^dy Melbourne,

Ever y^rs most affectionately, B.

CHELTENHAM, *October 20th*, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY M[ELBOURNE],—Tell A[nnabella] that I am more proud of her *rejection* than I can ever be of *another's acceptance*; this sounds rather *equivocal*, but if she takes it in the sense I mean it, and *you* don't blunder it in the delivery, with one of your *wicked laughs*, it will do for want of something better. It merely means that the *hope* of obtaining *her* (or

[1] Lord Oxford's. [2] Miss Milbanke.

anybody else—but skip this parenthesis) was more pleasing than the possession of St. Ursula and the 11,000 virgins (being a greater number than have ever *since* existed at the *same time* in that capacity) could possibly have been to her "disconsolate and unmathematical admirer, X. Y. Z."

"Not a word to C.!" as you please. *I* who do not write at all, am in no danger of betraying our conspiracies. I am not sorry to hear that she has written to a "man" or "waltzed," because both *were in* the *Articles*, of which I must take advantage at the proper time, for the *infringement*, and be angry enough to make a decent quarrel, or rather defence, when she falls upon me, which she shall not, if I can keep out of the way.

My terrific projects amount to this—to remain on good terms with L^dy Cowper and Mrs. Lamb, and on the *best* terms with *you*, being the three pleasantest persons, in very different ways, with whom I am acquainted, and to be as quiet or cool with C.—as a mere *common acquaintance*—as my wish to retain *your intimacy* will permit; if not, and I must quarrel with one of the parties, it shall certainly be with *her*, and indeed I should prefer it at once on every account; I am sick and annoyed with the connection. I fear A. is right, that I cannot be indifferent, but change from love "to hate with the bitterest contempt."

Believe me I would not give up your friendship, and that of three or four rational beings, for five thousand Carolines, were each five thousand times more *perfect* than she is the *reverse*. What can I say or write to her? It will answer no end. I shall be bored with reproaches, *exclamation*, *declamation*, *defamation*, and perhaps she may set off to display a *vindication* in person. I mean (*entre nous*, my dear Machiavel) to play off L^dy O[xford] against her, who would have no objection *perchance*, but she dreads her scenes, and has asked me not to mention that we have met, to C., or that I am going to Eywood[1]—where, by the bye, I am not sure that I am going.

[1] Lord Oxford's place near Presteign.

In short, if not by yourself, cannot any of your friends, intimate or subordinate, "varnish this tale of truth" for her? If it was a fiction there would be no difficulty, but certainly truth is an artichoke, particularly to *her*.

Not a word of L^dy O. for the present to C.—and certainly to *no one* else. When C. returns, she will commence some precious flirtation elsewhere, which will give me the opportunity of breaking at once. Perhaps Dublin has done it already. Write to me, and believe that whatever I am to A., B., C., &c., I am ever yours,

Most affectionately and sincerely, B.

P.S.—My *love* to *L^d M*[*elbourne*].

P.S.—Thanks for your *Examiner*; Hunt is a clever man, and I should like to know his opinion. Pray send it, it will be very acceptable. I shall return it faithfully if required.

October 24th, 1812.

My dear L^dy Melbourne,—I am just setting off through detestable roads for—[Eywood]. You can make such use of the incident of our acquaintance as you please with C., only do not say that I am *there*, because she will possibly write, or do some absurd thing in that quarter, which will spoil everything, and I think there are enough of persons embroiled already, without the addition of ——, who has besides enough to manage already without these additions. This I know also to be her wish, and certainly it is mine. You may say that we met at C[heltenham] or elsewhere—anything but that we are *now* together. By all means confide in L^dy "Blarney" [1] or the "Morning Post." Seriously, if anything requires a little *hyperbole*, let her have it; I have left off writing entirely, and will have nothing more to do with it.

"If you mention anything to me" she is sure to have

[1] Lady Blarney was the sobriquet of Lady Bessborough.

it! How? I have not written these two months but twice, nor was your name mentioned in either. The last was entirely about L[d] Clare, between whom and me she has been intermeddling and conveying notes from L[dy] C[lar]e on the subject of a foolish difference between Clare and myself, in which I believe I am wrong as usual. But that is over.

Her last letters to me are full of complaints against *you*, for I know not what disrespectful expressions about the "letter opened," &c. &c.

I have not answered them nor shall.

They talk of going to Sicily. On that head I have nothing to say, you and Mr. L[amb] are the best judges; to me it must be a matter of perfect indifference; and though I am written to professedly to be consulted on the subject, what possible answer could I give that would not be impertinent?

It would be the *best* place for *her* and the worst for him (in all points of view) on earth, unless he was in some official capacity.

As I have said before, do as you will. In my next I will answer your questions as to the three persons you speak of; at present I have not time, though I am *tempted* by the *theme*.

As to A[nnabella] that must take its chance—I mean the *acquaintance*; for it never will be anything more, depend upon it, even if she *revoked*. I have still the same opinion, but I never was enamoured; and as I very soon shall be in some other quarter, *Cossi finiva*. Do not fear about C[aroline] even if we meet, but allow me to keep out of the way if I can, merely for the sake of peace and quietness. You were never more *groundlessly* alarmed; for I am not what you imagine, in one respect. I have gone through the experiment before; more than once, and I never was separated three months without a perfect *cure*; even though y[e] acquaintance was renewed. I have even stood as much *violence* as could be brought into the field in y[e] present occasion. In the first vol. of Marmontel's Memoirs, towards the end, you will find my opinion on the subject of women in

general in the mouth of Madame de Tencin, should you deign to think it worth a moment's notice.

Ever yours most affectionately, B.

P.S.—If you write to Cheltenham my letters will be forwarded. And *do* write. I have very few correspondents, and none but this which give me much pleasure.

EYWOOD, PRESTEIGN, *October 30th*, 1812.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—Though you have not written to me lately, I can account for the *prudential* silence, and do not blame you, although one of your epistles *anywhere* is a great comfort.

Everything stands as you could wish and as I wished, and nothing more need be said on that subject.

I have had an epistle from Ireland, short and full of resignation, so that I trust your cares are nearly wound up in that quarter; at least, I must appeal to you if I have not done everything in my power to bring them to a conclusion, and now I have more reasons than ever for wishing them never to be renewed.

The country round this place is wild and beautiful, consequently very delightful; I think altogether preferable even to Middleton (where the *beauties* certainly did not belong to the *landscape*), although the recollection of my visit there will always retain its "proper" pre-eminence.

I am at present, however, a little laid up, for a short time ago I received a blow with a stone thrown by accident by one of the children, as I was viewing the remains of a Roman encampment. It struck me—providentially, though near the eye, yet far enough to prevent the slightest injury to that very material organ; and though I was a little stunned, and the stone being very sharp, the wound bled rather profusely, I have now recovered all but a slight scar, which will remain, I rather think, for a considerable time. It just missed an artery, which at first, from the blood's flowing in a little spout, was supposed to be cut,

but this was a false alarm ; indeed, I believe it has done me good, for my headaches have since entirely ceased.

This is my old luck, always *near* something serious, and generally escaping as now with a *slight* accident. An inch either way—the temple, the eye, or eyelid—would have made this no jesting matter ; as it is, I thank my good Genius that I have still two eyes left to admire you with, and a head (uncracked) which will derive great benefit from anything which may spring from your own.

I suppose you have left London, as I see by the papers L^d^ and L^dy^ Cowper are returned to Herts.

If you hear anything that you think I ought to know, depend upon my seconding you to the utmost, but I believe you will coincide with me in opinion that there is little apprehension *now* of any scene from C., and still less occasion to have recourse to A. or your "forlorn hope" on that account.

I leave it to you to deal with L^dy^ B. and &c. Say of *me* what you please, but do not let any *other name* be taken in vain—particularly to one whom you so well know as that *ingenious hyperbolist* L^dy^ B.

I am sick of scenes, and have imbibed a taste for something like *quiet*. Do not quite forget me—for *everywhere* I remember you, ever D^r^ L^dy^ M.

Y^r^ most affectionate, B.

P.S.—Why are you silent ? Do you doubt me, in the "bowers of Armida ?" I certainly am very much enchanted, but *your spells* will always retain their full force. Try them.

EYWOOD, PRESTEIGN, *November 4th*, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY^ M[ELBOURNE],—Thanks for the *notice*, of which I shall duly avail myself. I have throughout the whole of this, you are convinced, been perfectly sincere with *you* and surely not less so now than ever. It must end ; and I can see no purpose which any interview can possibly answer ; and I wrote to say as much, adding moreover another important *truth*—that I am

deeply and seriously engaged elsewhere. All *our* wishes tend to quiet, and any scene of C.'s will merely involve others in very unpleasant circumstances, without tending at all to re-union, which is now absolutely *impossible*, even if I wished it. Besides, as there will be more *breakings* off than one, much precious mischief will ensue if her illustrious example (I mean C.'s) is to be imitated in all quarters.

In my last letter I stated that I was *attached*, but to whom, even in allusion, I did not think myself justified in mentioning.[1]

As to L^dy B[essborough], what would she have? Have I not complied with her own professed wishes? Did I not tell you that, end how it would, *she* would never forgive me for not being sufficiently *dramatic*. I am out of all patience with her and hers, and, come what may, will have no explanations, no scenes, no anything; and if necessary I will quit London or the country altogether, rather than subject myself to the renewal of the last year's harass. The sooner, the stronger, the fuller you state this the better. Good God! am I to be hunted from place to place like a Russian *bear* or Emperor? Do pray, do what you can for me; I would not at this time have an *éclat* for the world. This country is very much to my taste; and I have taken a seat of L^d Oxford's (Kinsham Court, about five miles off, in a *delightful* situation) for next year. I believe some arrangements relative to it will call me here again at Christmas.

This is no secret, and need not be one if you think it worth mentioning.

I leave you full powers to say what you please to C.; she won't, I trust, be silly enough to torment anyone but me, or she will find it labour in vain.

You need not doubt me; by the bye, I am committing

[1] Lady Caroline Lamb, in her novel *Glenarvon*, gives a letter from Glenarvon which was admitted by Byron to be copied from one which he wrote to Lady Caroline. In it occur the words "learn that I am attached to another." The letter is printed in *Letters and Journals*, ii. 136.

myself too much, but let that be a proof that I do not *doubt you.*

I am asked to Middleton on the 10th; shall you be there? If so, I will go.

I do not know if my letter will reach Ireland in time, nor what further good it may do. L^dy B. with her foolish prognostics—she does not wish them fulfilled half so much as I do—she always said all *went* on as she wished; pray Heaven it may!

I write in very bad humour; forgive it, only manage *her.* I am sure of *everyone* else, even *myself*, the person least likely to be depended on.

My next shall be a pleasanter letter; pardon the peevishness of this.

Ever, my *dearest friend*, y^rs, B.

EYWOOD, PRESTEIGN, *November 6th*, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY M.,—Not being aware of any amusement which can possibly last four-and-twenty hours, by "Shrewsbury clock," sans intermission, I suppose one may look at a Roman encampment now and then, and yet be exceedingly occupied nevertheless with more serious entertainments.

Your "Coach horse" is admirable, but *not* apropos. I am glad you recommend "cupping;" I wanted to be so, but L^dy O[xford] says I *shan't* (God knows why), and you know I am too tractable to oppose a negative to anything.

I believe I mentioned in my last that I have taken Kinsham Court in this vicinity, with the description of which I shall not trouble you. I shall be here at Christmas to look after my arrangements.

Seriously (and I am *very* serious), I have so completely rendered a renewal with C. next to impossible, that you will at least give me credit for sincerity; and to mend the matter, all this is infinitely more to my taste than the A[nnabella] scheme, to which my principal inducement was the tie to yourself, which I confess would have delighted me.

I have had a tremulous letter from Mrs. [George]

L[amb], who is in a panic about C. This I have answered, and announced, as a simple piece of information, that I have taken a seat in Herefordshire, an intimation which, with "L^dy Blarney's" marginal notes, will have a miraculous effect on the arrival of Pandora (and her boxes of evil for all her acquaintance) at Tixal.

So, a new accusation of imposition! At *M*[*iddleton*], and before—my memory really fails me—I never laughed at P. (by the bye, this is an initial which might puzzle posterity when our correspondence bursts forth in the 20th century), nor can I possibly pronounce where all was "proper" who was the "properest," but I am sure no one can regret the general *propriety* half so much as I do.

Though *we* are very quiet, and wish to remain so as much as C. and *others* may permit, yet *we* are also determined to abide by our Articles, and not to relinquish a single *right* (read "*wrong*" instead, if you like) which devolves to the conquerors on such occasions. As to the L^dy Blarney, though I expected some absurd dissatisfaction on her part, I own it provokes me. "Unfair!" Who could act fairly with people who are sending couriers, and threatening to follow them? As to C., she will find her in *fits* for the winter, without me to help her, depend upon it; and unless Providence sends another illness and journey, it is all over with my successor. I guess at Webster [1] (who is now in Parliament, and will be in town more) as the first essay; but I doubt the Bart. himself as somewhat of the coldest. Besides, he must sacrifice his senatorial duties, and do nothing else but attend to his perplexities, which will be manifold.

I presume that I may now have access to the lower regions of Melbourne House, from which my *ascent* had long excluded me. I doubt if C. and I will be on speaking terms; and it is on the whole much better we should not, but I trust the taciturnity is not to be

[1] Sir Godfrey Vassal Webster, 5th Bart., M.P. for Sussex 1812–1820, *b.* 1789, *d.* 1836.

general. Your threatened visit of *C.* to this place would have no effect in this *quarter*, all being secure. I shall go to Middleton shortly after the 12th inst.; address your answer *there*, or to *Cheltenham*. I hope to find you at M[iddleton].

You see, nothing makes me unmindful of *you*, and I feel but too much obliged by your reciprocal remembrance.

Ever, my dear L^dy M., Y^rs most affectionately, B.

November 9th, 1812.

My dear L^dy M.,—With y^r letter I have received an *Irish* Epistle, foolish, headstrong, and vainly threatening herself, &c. &c. To this I shall return no answer; and though it is of very great importance to me to be in London at this time, I shall if possible delay it till I hear from you that there is no chance of any scenes.

Mr. D. could hardly avoid guessing but too correctly, for not a servant in the house but was afraid to awaken me, and *he* was called home from a club for that purpose; his first and natural question to the man, was whence he came, from whom, and why? the answer to all which is obvious, but D. ought not to have mentioned it, and so I shall tell him.

Why he placed me in Notts at this moment I cannot say, except that he knew no better.

Mr. C[laughton] may repent of his bargain for aught I know to the contrary, but he has paid part of the money. If he fails, the law will decide between us, and if he acts in an ungentlemanly manner, the remedy is still more simple.

With regard to L^dy B[essborough] and L^dy C[aroline], I have little more to say, and I hope nothing to do. She has hurt and disgusted me by her latter conduct beyond expression, and even if I did not love another, I would never speak to her again while I existed, and this you have my full consent to state to those whom it may concern. I have passed my time since her departure *always* quietly and partly delightfully, nor will I submit to caprice and injustice.

This *was* to *be* broken off—it is broken off. I had neither the hope nor the inclination to satisfy L^dy B[essborough] on all points ; if it is unfair to comply with her own express wishes, let her complain till she is tired, but I trust a little reflection will convince even her that she is wrong to be dissatisfied. C. threatens to revenge herself upon *herself*, by all kinds of perverseness ; this is her concern. All I desire is to have nothing more to do with them—no explanations, no interviews ; in short I neither can nor will bear it any longer.

As long as there was a necessity for supporting her I did not *shrink* from any consequences, but when all was adjusted and you agreed to overlook the past, in the hope of the future, my resolution was taken, and to that I have adhered, and will adhere.

I cannot exist without some object of love. I have found one with whom I am perfectly satisfied, and who as far as I can judge is no less so with me ; our mutual wish is *quiet*, and for this reason I find a double pleasure (after all the ridiculous display of last season) in repose. I have engaged myself too far to recede, nor do I regret it. Are *you* at least satisfied with what I have done to comply with your wishes, if L^dy B[essborough] is not ? If L^dy C[aroline] wishes any interview pray explain for me that *I* WILL NOT meet her ; if she has either pride or feeling this will be sufficient. All letters, &c. &c., may be easily destroyed without it.

November 10th, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY M.,—Last night my hostess, L^dy O[xford], received a long epistle from Caroline containing a number of *unanswerable* questions, to all of which I persuaded her to give no reply whatever. Is everyone to be embroiled by C. ? Is she mad, or mischievous only ? I was in doubt whether L^d Oxford (who knew the writer by L^d Bessborough's franks) would not take y^e alarm, but we have foiled her there, if that was her intention. This morning *your* letter arrives, and really when I compare her *letter* to me, to L^dy O., and the contents of yours, I must pronounce C. to be the most

contradictory, absurd, selfish, and contemptibly wicked of human productions. What she may say of me, I can only surmise by what she has said of others, but she seems to outdo the usual outdoings of *gentlewomen* on such occasions. Fortunately for me, I have her own testimonies in my behalf: but if she will raise a storm, be it so. She will be the first to perish in it. Her conduct as to Mr. Lamb is of a piece with the rest. Since my first acquaintance with her I have suffered nothing but discomfort of every description, nor can I at all foresee how it will end. My own resolution is taken. I do most sincerely wish that she would reflect for one moment, or that she was fully aware of my determination never to hold any kind of communication with her in future. I have written till I am tired. I can do no more, most assuredly, come what may; she will never be received by me—*now*, it is impossible. I could wish to feel towards her as a *friend*, but as she herself says, she has resolved since she is "not loved, to be *detested*."

Her letter to me expressed this agreeable sentiment. Her letter to L^{dy} O. was a long *German* tirade, evidently to discover on what *terms* we were; and the information contained in yours I need not comment upon. The part about Mr. Lamb is like Don Felix, "she would engross all the Violantes in the creation." If she loves *him*, why not permit me to be at rest? if *me*—why this affectation?

You may suppose L^{dy} O. is not very much delighted with her new style of correspondence, besides having a slight *embarras* of the same kind on her own hands on the same score. In short, we manage, in our infinite love of quiet, to disturb *Ireland* and *Scotland*, besides some part of England and Wales.

In the meantime, the present is at our own disposal, and as no one can answer for the future, 'tis a great consolation to lose as little of it as possible.

How you will laugh at all this! So should I were I not one of the Dram. Pers.

Col. P.'s wound is slight—and L^{dy} Bessborough

must make the most of it with Caroline. It will answer like the illness, if she does it as well.

Ever y^rs, my dear L^dy M., Most affectionately, B.

November 11th, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY M.,—I trouble you again principally to return through your hands to L^dy Bessborough an Opera ticket, with many thanks and proper speeches.

Yesterday I wrote you a longish, dullish, and testy letter, for a brilliant epistle from the Isle had put me out of all patience, but I have already pronounced my *Amen* to that subject. Amongst other excellent arguments you may make use of, I humbly take the following to be decisive: besides my other manifold imperfections—which, I may say with Richard the Third, incapacitate "me from skipping in a lady's chamber," I am grown within these few months much *fatter*, and have a visible scar under my right eye, quite "*balafré*;" and I can't think of starving myself down to an amatory size.

This, with the A. scheme[1]—properly commented upon—and my *present abode*, with all the concomitants, might, I think, furnish out as pretty a maternal harangue as ever was pronounced in Cavendish Square.

I have written to you so much, and so stupidly, that I will now have mercy, and stop where I never stopped before, at the second page.

Ever y^rs, my dear friend, B.

November 14th, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY M.,—This day a further dispatch from C., with letters to me and our hostess—the one to me rational enough, but to *her* only calm at the commencement; the conclusion winding up in the old style, and threatening, if some unexpressed or unintelligible wish (about a picture, I believe) is not complied with, to visit Eywood in all her terrors.

They leave Ireland on the 10th, so by this time are safe in England and, for aught I know, within a few miles of us, for the roads are very near my present abode.

[1] His proposal of marriage.

The floods have detained me beyond my time; indeed, business requires me in town, and I shall make an attempt for *Cheltenham* on the 16th.

Lady Oxford is very anxious that I should not be in town till C. has left it. So am I; and I think you will be of the same opinion. I have just this *moment* been called to the window of the room where I am writing, and it has been suggested that a longer stay would be better on *that account*; but I fear that I must go on Monday. If I remain much longer, "*il Sposo*" may be seized with crotchets, and as I return at Xmas, and I really have business, I determine on the journey.

My London letters all stop at Cheltenham, so I know nothing but by cross posts.

If C. makes her *début* here we shall have a pretty scene! She has received my letter avowing a penchant elsewhere; and though I did not specify the *idol*, her subsequent epistles shew that the *date* of my own letter had sufficiently expounded what was not stated, and I do think, has answered the purpose to a certain extent. She requires FRIENDSHIP; but you know that with her disposition it is impossible. For some time at least, we must come to a total separation. Besides, Lady Oxford is of that opinion, and whether right or wrong, I have no choice; and I certainly shall not waver an instant between the two. You will, I hope, prevent an interview. After all, you have more weight with her than any one.

L^{dy} Blarney always spoils everything—bad as well as good; never did anyone throw away such excellent experiences. She does by accident all that L^{dy} Holland performs on purpose.

If L^{d} Jersey is not in town I shall stop at Middleton in my way, according to invitation. But why are *you* absent? I expect to find letters from you at Cheltenham, and upon your advice much will depend.

I am perfectly satisfied with my *situation*, and have no intention of *changing* it, unless *others* set the example.

Everything goes on "*sans peur et sans reproche*," yet very unlike Bayard for all that. I congratulate

A[nnabella] and myself on our mutual escape. That would have been but a *cold collation*, and I prefer hot suppers.

Dear L^dy M., ever y^rs, B.

P.S.—I open my letter to say that I have just been conversing with [Lady Oxford] on y^e subject of Caroline and her late strange letters to ——, and she wishes me to remain a few days longer. I shall therefore wait for your *answer* here; one *line* only to say where they are will reach me by Wednesday. Pray write it, and my movements will be accordingly.

I thought and fully intended to have finished the subject of C. for ever, but you perceive that it is impossible till she is more tractable. I am, however, thankful in one instance, that she has hitherto made *no progress* in disturbing our arrangements.

I shall wait for your answer here, as otherwise I may stumble on them on the road.

November 16th, 1812.

My dear L^dy M.,—A letter from Holyhead proves them in England.[1] She is rational and calm, though rather plaintive, and still presses on the point of *seeing* for the purpose of vindication, from I know not what, which her friends and enemies have, it seems, been about during her absence. To cut that short at once, a *promise* has been *requested* and *given*, that I will not on any account consent to such an interview; and this, if possible, I must adhere to. *She* denies ever having abused me, &c., &c. Now this you know, and I know, to be most contemptibly false—not only to her mother, to Mrs. [G.] L[amb] and to you, but she even forgets a volume of reproaches to myself, which I shall remember rather longer than I could wish.

My hope now rests with you and your influence over her, which I know to be great over *all* who *know* you, and more even *with her* than she is aware of.

Recollect, whatever may be said, that your name has

[1] The Bessboroughs with Lady C. Lamb.

not been mentioned in any letter to her for these last two months; that she at most can only *guess* at what has passed of our correspondence. You must use your own discretion with L^dy Bessborough, who is not the trustiest of her age and country; with her I have had no communication whatever, since the letter which puzzled her in October.

Lady Oxford received two letters from C.—the most imprudent of her imprudent proceedings. Of course she has sense enough to take no notice by answer or otherwise; and if C. does not renew her epistles, I will take care that these do no mischief.

The roads are now impassable, but in a few days I shall attempt my voyage London-ward by Cheltenham.

You will now, I trust, my dear L^dy M., think that I have kept to the tenor of our "*bond*;" that I have done all in my power to render a renewal impracticable; and I can assure you there are obstacles now in the way sufficient to satisfy L^dy Bessborough, if anything could satisfy a personage wavering between Nature and Art: her own fears for the consequences to C., and her anger that so interesting a heroine should not be adored in the oldest, and most tedious fashion of feminine worship. She is doubtless very angry that *I* should change. I am sure I waited a decent time for y^e lady to take the *pas*; and she may console herself with the reflection that it was nothing on her part from y^e beginning but original sin, or *vanity*—which, I cannot determine; but the next adventure with the newest comer will probably shew to better advantage.

You will tell me if L^dy B. and I are to be on terms, and *how*, and *why*, and *wherefore*, and *when*, and *but*, and *if*, &c., &c., down to the very "*pourquoi* of the *pourquoi*."

In the interim, I am ever, my dear L^dy M.,

Y^rs most truly, B.

November 18th, 1812.

My dear L^dy M.,—I think it proper to apprise you that I have written by this day's post to L^dy B. in

Cavendish Square. Conceiving that my *possible* arrival in town about the same time with *herself* and *hers*, might awaken her alarms, I thought it as well to explain that all was concluded between *B.* and *C.*[1] Your name is not even *hinted at* in this epistle (which you will probably see), nor that of any other person, save and except their *two* Ladyships B. and C. L., and your humble servant.

Since my last I have heard nothing of C. I have only to request y^e^ continuance of your *good offices* to *cement* the *breach* or rather to *widen* y^e^ *separation.*

I have little doubt the task is over; nothing but the spirit of contradiction could render it difficult, for *love* is out of the question.

I am still here—only sad at the prospect of going; reading, laughing, and playing at blindman's-buff with y^e^ *children*: a month has slipped away in this and such-like innocent recreations; my eye is well, and my person *fatter*, but I shall soon return to my abstinent system, and grow thin and austere as usual.

I have *promised* not to see C. (without *permission*, which will not be granted for some time). This, you may be sure, is not mentioned to *L^dy^ B.*, and I think may as well be kept in *petto* unless it becomes *requisite*, which I trust will not be the case.

Have not I done well for *you*? All to oblige your ladyship, and prove my devotion.

I am off on Saturday.

Ever y^rs^, dear L^dy^ M., B.

MIDDLETON, *November 26th*, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY^ MELBOURNE,—I perceive by y^e^ arrivals and departures in y^e^ papers that you will not object to my being in town (as I must be on Sunday) on business. I shall take my seat on Tuesday, and not go to the romantic melodrama of Monday,[2] notwithstanding the attraction of a royal Roscius.

[1] Obviously, Byron and Caroline.

[2] Opening of Parliament.

I have been here this two days past in the palace of *propriety*, with a picture of Lucretia in the act of—*suicide*, over my chimney, and a tome of Pamela lying on y^e^ table ; y^e^ first as a hint, I presume, not to covet y^e^ *mistress* of a house, and the last as a defensive treatise in behalf of that *maid*. The decorations of my *last* apartment were certainly very different, for a print of Rinaldo and Armida was one of the most prominent ornaments.

On Saturday I left Herefordshire, with more regrets than need be inflicted in detail upon my correspondents—so no more upon that topic. I begin to think your rhetoric has had its proper effect on C. I have written twice to the Lady B. to decline an interview.

I found at Cheltenham your letters and C.'s, and *spared* you on this eternal subject by a cessation of ink for three days. I trust this is nearly the last to be shed on the same theme. She charges me with my *own* letters. I have heard that a man in *liquor* was sometimes responsible for what he may have said, and perhaps the same rule extends to *love* ; if so, pray make the amplest apology for me. The moment I came to myself I was sorry for it. One thing the lady forgets. For a very *long time* (in the calendar of Asmodeus) my answers were the subject of endless reproach on account of *their coldness*. At last I did write to her without restraint, but rarely without regret. I do not mean to deny my attachment—it *was*—and it is not.

It was no great compliment, for I could love anything on earth that appeared to wish it ; at the same time I do sometimes like to choose for myself.

I shall be in town (the post is waiting) at Batt's Hotel, on Sunday. I write this to tell you as much, as under the present circumstances we cannot meet (except perhaps at L^y^ H.'s) for some time, and I heartily acquiesce in your opinion upon that subject. Believe me, ever

Y^rs^, d^r^ L^dy^ M., B.

MIDDLETON, *November 27th*, 1812.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I have some hopes from what I hear that you are in Parliament—if so—whatever part you take, and of course it will be with your father, I shall rejoice in the success of which I think you certain.

My time has been passed, since I wrote to you last, chiefly at Eywood, where you would have been a welcome guest, and I think, as pleased as pleasant.

In a few days I leave L^d^ Jersey's for London, where you will find me at Batt's Hotel, and at Xmas I return to Eywood, near which I have taken a seat of L^d^ O.'s called Kinsham Court.

From all this you will infer that the connection with Lady Caroline Lamb is completely broken off—it is. I have formed another which, whatever its advantages or disadvantages, is at least less troublesome and more to my taste. More it would not be fair to add, even to you, *mon ami*, but I leave you to your brilliant conjectures and usual laugh at my *égaremens*. Sure I am you will rejoice at my disentanglement from one who has plagued us both so frequently; and as my escape is not owing to my prudence, in future you will have some confidence in y^e^ Fates who have stood my friends, and will, I trust, not abandon one who leaves so much to their own good pleasure.

I was once not very far from you; on your route from Wales, you must have passed through Cheltenham.

I am still remote from *marriage*, and presume, whenever that takes place, "even-handed justice" will return me cuckoldom in abundance.

I only left Eywood on Saturday, and have since been chiefly here, where sundry of the nobility and gentry are assembled in one of the pleasantest of all possible houses. Both L^d^ J[ersey] and his Countess are delightful, and their hospitality is Oriental, and except the place which I lately left, I prefer that where I am to all visiting residences.

Your father, it seems, has accepted a baronetcy, but I hope he will not stop there; it would give me great

pleasure to have you some day on our benches, to which I trust his dignity is but a preliminary step.

You will see me in town, but I shall not go to the opening, if I arrive in time even for the regency *début.*

Tuesday will be time enough to take my seat. You must have been amused with all this *de*jected address fracas; to me the joke is somewhat near, but I can laugh at it, though no gainer.

I can tell you some odd things about it unknown to the public. It was quite unthought of and unsought by me. How go on the Quartos?

Ever yours, my dear H., BYRON.

BATT'S HOTEL, *November 30th*, 1812.

DEAR L^{DY} M.,—I am just arrived, and have received exactly 36 letters, notes, etc. (as I write, a 37th) of all descriptions, so that I have full employment for y^{e} present. I find amongst them some from Caroline of yesterday's date (Welwyn), I believe, most incoherent, &c., and to which, in the name of all the saints and martyrs, what answer can I give, but what has been given already?

Her *letters* I have already said of my own accord I will give up to *her*, or destroy in *your* or *her* or any other's presence, so that the interference of any other person will only *mar* my good intention. I thank you for the *hint*—an answer to *men* always depends upon the temperance and tenor of the question.

I am extremely glad that I did not receive y^{rs} of the 27th till just now, and that I had before from *Cheltenham*, stated my intention already as to letters "sans phrase" from any person, because I much doubt whether I could have given the like answer to a *peremptory* embassy.

As to Lady Bessborough—how many months did she spend in trying to make me believe the *whole* a *joke*, &c., on C.'s part? and now she is angry that I at last believed so. I have some trinkets which she

wishes returned, or rather *had*, for God knows where they are by this time. I wish she would not think of returning *mine*, as in that case I must search the country for *hers*, which will take some time and trouble.

I shall endeavour to wait on you to-morrow.

D^r L^dy M., ever y^rs, B.

P.S.—The letter of to-day is the most *mild* I ever read. I really have not PATIENCE for all this. I cannot please everybody. She and I must not meet; not that I dread a *past* weakness, but it must not be. As to others, I have really had so much plague on the subject, and been at so much pains to free you all from these inquietudes, that I very much fear my *politeness* will not carry me much further.

L^dy H. has been taunting her, it seems. Her answer to L^dy O.[1] is stuff. *We* nor *she* nor *I* sent any *answer whatever*, and I have implored L^dy O. to be *silent*. If you knew but *ten* of the *twenty* scrapes I am in at this moment you would (and will, I hope) pardon my pettishness.

I do not [know] which are the worst, lawyers, friends, or the *fair sect*. I know L^dy O. has not answered her, and will not I *trust*—but who can trust anything or anybody?

December 9th, 1812.

DEAR L^DY M.,—You have long ago forgotten a certain ring which I am still in your debt, and I hope you will not reject the only thing I ever dared to present you, nor violate y^e conditions on which I accepted your own by refusing this.

I regret that I lost your party last night, but meeting with Hobhouse, whom I had not seen for some time, I was detained too long either to appear or apologise.

As I shall not see you before I leave town, I must respectfully take my farewell, and assure you that as

[1] Lady Oxford.

far as *I* am concerned the *amiable* and *sincere* Phryne shall never be the cause of further uneasiness.

To yourself I am ever, d^r L^dy M.,
Most truly y^rs obliged and &c., &c.,
BYRON.

December fourteenth, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY M.,—The trinkets are travelling (at least most of them) in all parts of England and Wales; they certainly are not in the possession of —— [Lady Oxford?]; indeed so anxious was I to get rid of them that most of them had disappeared before my acquaintance with *her*. The truth is, they were all *women's adornments*, and looked so very out of place in my custody, that lest they should seem not *honestly* come by, I was too glad to find anyone to take them off my hands. This is all the answer I can give to a species of *bullying* which I presume the lady has learned in Ireland. She will not deliver up my letters—very well—I *will* deliver up her's nevertheless, and mine she may make the most of; they are very like the Duke of York's,[1] and the Editor of any magazine will treat with her for them on moderate terms.

Whatever my motive—good or bad—may be for resolving not to keep back her brilliant documents, I think it will not be imputed to fear, since by so doing without receiving my own, I leave the story entirely to her own telling; and as she has just acknowledged that *her* letters would "*ruin her*," I leave my determination in this respect to her own construction, which, of course, will be the worst possible. This I will do on my return to *you*, and *you* only, or L^dy Bessborough, save and except one *box full*, which I must for certain reasons *burn* in *your* presence, so pray have a good fire, and fireguard, on my next visit. I repeat that I never will again request my own; let her keep them, or what she pleases.

[1] A reference to the trial for libel of Mary Anne Clarke, mistress of the Duke of York.

I do not exactly understand who my "secret foes" and her ambushed "men in buckram" are; all this we shall know in due time. I don't know whether I can fight, but I presume, like the redoubtable Nym, "I can wink and hold out my cold iron" as well as another.[1] This I know, that if she does plunge me into a quarrel, it will be a serious one, for I am tired of trifling, and if any noble blood is to be spilt in her behalf, I had as lief the puddle was *Irish* as of any other complexion. She writes menacingly, and at the same time accuses me of *menaces*. What menaces have I used? Poor little weak thing! She says I "concealed" myself in town, that is, I took my seat in the House, and visited all my acquaintance every day. The comparison of the rattlesnake, or any other with which Polito can furnish her, are very much at her service. I rejoice that she stopped at Exeter Change, being rather apprehensive that she might have driven as far as Billingsgate for a metaphor. Don't interrupt her, and if she wishes you all to quarrel with me, pray indulge her.

If I *had* the trinkets I could *not* deliver them up to the threat of the "secret bitter assistant knights," and I am rather glad that I have them not to deliver—her *letters* I give up because she has a *child*. The other things will be of no consequence, but will form pretty subject-matter for dispute without hurting her. As I have some guess at her "daring champions," I shall not wait their good pleasure, but explain to them on the very first opportunity my sentiments of them and their conduct; in the meantime I shall not stir to right or left, but pursue "the even tenor of my way." This is my answer to *her* and *your* letter. Tell L^dy Bessborough whatever disturbance arises is not my seeking. I have borne as much as man can bear, and even now *I* will put it out of my power to rely upon my own resolutions, lest fresh insults should get the better of my temper. All I desire from you or L^dy B. is to "nothing extenuate nor set down aught in malice;" the *last* part of the

[1] Corporal Nym. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and *Henry V.*

quotation is not addressed to *you*. To *her* I have no reply, no observation of any kind; "if she will perish, let her perish." If you hear anything further you will let me know; if not, at any rate write to me, and believe me,

Ever y^rs^ most truly, B.

P.S.—I always thought that anything given to a person became their property, and these things were *forced* upon me, as she knows; but once *mine* I was at liberty to part with them, which I did to different people almost immediately.

P.S.—She says I abuse her everywhere, and yet *conceal* myself!! I do neither one nor the other. If I mentioned her at all it would not be with praise; but it is a subject so utterly abhorrent to my feelings that I never do, and as to concealment *you* can answer that.

December 15*th*, 1812.

DEAR L^DY^ M.,—Contrary to my first intent I have answered her letter to me, and inclose it to you for delivery.

If she writes to L^d^ O[xford] I am almost sure that *he* will write to M^r^ L[amb]; if so—there will be a pretty scene; we had some difficulty to prevent this once before, and I suppose it would not be very desirable now. He is tolerably obstinate, and it would be as well not to bring it to the proof; of course I shall prevent it if possible, because eventually it would be unpleasant to all parties. I should wish you to be present when she receives this letter, and tell me the effect.

Ever yours, B.

Always take this with you; *you* are not mentioned in this letter, nor is *any name* therein.

[EYWOOD, PRESTEIGN], *December* 21*st*, 1812.

MY DEAR L^DY^ MELBOURNE,—I have not written to you for some days, which must be some wonder and great relief to yourself. I do not presume that my epistle to the most amiable of the Ponsonbys will have much

effect, and I fear L^dy Bessborough will not deem it sufficiently "soothing."

As the Lady, however, seems to have imagined herself extremely terrific in my eyes, I could not altogether humour the mistake, and leave it to the inhabitants of Chili (or where is it?) to worship the D——l. "Soothing!" quotha! I wonder who wants it most! I think at least some portion of that same soothing syrup ought to fall to my share.

We have some talk here of a voyage to Sicily, etc., in the spring; if so, I shall be of the party, but this is merely speculation for the present. Hobhouse and myself have serious thoughts of "Levanting" once more, and I expect to hear from him soon on that, and other subjects.

You will not be sorry to find me once more "on the wings of the wind," and I hope you will send me some English intelligence, foreign and domestic. I shall still retain Kinsham (the place I have taken) even if I go abroad; if it will be any satisfaction to the respectable C^e to know that she has had some share in disgusting me with this country, she may enjoy it to the full. If it were not for *others* I would set sail to-morrow.

My resentment against her is merely *passive*. I never will degrade myself into her enemy, notwithstanding *all* the provocatives so plentifully administered. I shall soon discover if she has been tampering with Clare, but shall not interfere between them further than concerns *myself*; she will make nothing of him—he has too much sense and too little vanity to be fooled like his friend.

I wish much to see you on my return to London, which will not be before the 12th of next month, if then; we are all very happy and serene—no scenes—a great deal of music—good cheer—spirits and temper—and every day convinces me of the *contrast*; by the bye, this *travelling scheme*, as far as regards *all* except Hobhouse and myself, must be a *secret*—being the *first* between you and me, and if you keep it well, I have *ten* more for your discreet ear when we meet.

I have not received the letter you mention from L^dy B[essborough], and have no great interest in its safe arrival. I do not want any recantations, and the old or new excuses; whatever the impression may be on others, on my mind it is indelible—but let that pass. It is odd that her last letter to me (which came with yours) contains nothing but mere *general* menaces of vengeance, and professions of not unwelcome hatred, but no particular denunciations of a serious description; the closing sentence is awfully amiable, and I copy it:—"You have told me how foreign women revenge; I will show you how an Englishwoman can,"—very like the style of Miss Matthews in "Amelia," and Lucy in the "Beggar's Opera," and by no means having even the merit of novelty in my ears.

A namesake of C.'s was much more polite in her expressions, though equally angry, and now, if I may trust the authority of several reputable gentlefolks, does me the honour after the interval of several years to speak of me in very gentle terms, and perhaps in the year 1820 your little Medea may relapse into a milder tone.

Believe me, dear L^dy M., Ever yours, B^N.

P.S.—I think your plan with her not so good as y^r general plans are; as long as she is in y^e country and has nothing to do but gallop on the turnpike, and scribble absurdities, she will be unmanageable; but a fortnight in town, the 10th uniform, the first fool, and the last comer will work wonders; commit her to C[avendish] Square, and she will forget everything, if not herself into the bargain. But you know best after all.

[Eywood, Presteign], *December 23rd*, 1812.

My dear Lady M.,—Your last anecdote [1] seems to shew that our friend is actually possessed by "the

[1] This refers to the *auto-da-fé* at Brocket Hall; when Lady C. Lamb burnt all her Byronic keepsakes, with an appropriate incantation. See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 447.

foul fiend Flibbertigibbet, who presides over mopping and mowing," and if the provincial literati don't insert it in the *St. Albans Mercury*, the collectors of extraordinaries ought to be dismissed for malversation and omission. Seriously, though, all this forms *my* best justification. I very much fear it will not forward your interests at the next election, except amongst y^e^ ballad-makers. What will the Lady B. say? I fear it will go nigh to the recall of Sir W. Farquhar, and the ancient disorder.

Was the " odious book " (which has just attained the *summit* of *fame* by giving a name to a *very slow race-horse*) added to the conflagration? and what might be the pretty piece of eloquence delivered by her right trusty henchman? My letters would have added very appropriately to y^e^ combustibles, and I regret y^e^ omission of such exquisite ingredients.

I wrote to you yesterday (franked and directed to M.H., not having then received y^e^ mandate to y^e^ contrary), and do not know that I can add anything to my details in that sheet. We are completely out of the world in this place, and have not even a *difference* to diversify the scene or amuse our correspondents and you know perhaps that the recapitulation or display of *all good* things is very insipid to auditors or beholders.

I wait the news of the reception of that same ineffable letter now in your hands, though (as I tell her) I have no great hopes of its doing the least good. It is written a little gravely but very much, nevertheless, in the usual tone, which L^dy^ B. is pleased to say is not " soothing." I am really become very indifferent as to her next proceedings, for what can she do more than she has already done?

I am much amused with y^e^ tale of L^dy^ Cowper's little girl; her mamma has always had a great share of my *most respectful* admiration. But I don't desire to be remembered to any of you, as I suppose the best wish you have is to forget me as soon as possible; besides which, under y^e^ impression of C.'s correspondence,

L^dy C. must conceive me to be a sucking Catiline, only less respectable. Bankes[1] is going abroad, and, as I said in my last, it is not very unlikely that I may recommence voyaging amongst the Mussulmen. If so, I claim you as a correspondent, since you *won't* give me up to the reasonable request of the moderate C., and in truth I don't wish you should. You know I have obeyed you in everything—in my suit to y^e Princess of Parallelograms,[2] my breach with little *Mania*, and my subsequent acknowledgments of the *sovereignty* of *Armida*. You have been my director, and are still, for I do not know anything you could not make me do, or undo; and *m'amie* (but this you *won't believe*) has not yet learned the art of *managing* me, nor superseded your authority. You would have laughed a little time ago, when I inadvertently said, talking of you, that there was nothing you could not make me do, or give up (if you thought it worth while)—a sentiment which did not meet with the entire approbation of my audience, but which I maintained like a Muscovite enamoured of *despotism*.

I hear little from London but the lies of the *Gazette*, and will back Buonaparte against the field still.

Pray write and tell me how your *taming* goes on. I am all acquiescence to you, and as much yours as ever, d^r L^dy M. B.

[Eywood], *December 27th*, 1812.

My dear L^dy M.,—I know very little of the P.'s[3] party and less of her publication (if it be hers), and am not at all in y^e secret; but I am aware that the advice given her by the most judicious of her "little Senate" has been to remain quiet, and leave all to the P[rincess] C[harlotte].

I have heard nothing of the thing you mention,

[1] William John Bankes, Byron's friend at Cambridge. He died at Venice in 1855. See *Letters*, i. 120.

[2] Miss Milbanke.

[3] The Princess of Wales

except in y^e papers, and did not imagine it to be *hers*. I by no means consider myself as an *attaché* to her, or any party; though I certainly should support her interest in Parliament if brought forward in any shape. And I doubt the possibility of the divorce: firstly, because he would already if he could; 2ndly, unless there is different law for sovereign and subject, she might recriminate (even were the charge proved), and by the law of the land, as in L^d Grosvenor and Duke C.'s case, there could be no divorce; 3rdly, it would hurt the daughter; 4thly, if he married again, and the Holy Ghost or any other begat him an heir, still there would be a party ready to bastardize the product of the 2nd marriage, by maintaining the legality of the first and denying his divorce to be legal; and 5thly, the uproar would be prodigious, and injure his nerves. For my part I care not, and think this country wants a little "civil buffeting" to bring some of us to our senses. I shall not mention your name, nor what you have said, though I fully agree with you that it is much better for her to be quiet.

M'amie thinks I agree with her in *all* her politics, but she will discover that this is a mistake.

She insists always upon the P[rincess]'s innocence; but then, as she sometimes reads me somewhat a tedious homily upon her *own*, I look upon it in much the same point of view as I should on Mary Magdalen's vindication of Mrs. Joseph, or any other *immaculate riddle*.

I suspect, from what you say, and what I have heard, that there will be a scene.

My proposed confidence to you will do for our meeting, and consists merely of one or two slight domestic things on which I want to ask your advice—and you *know* I not only ask but *take* it when you please.

I am glad C. is so quiet. Her account of my letter is right; her inference from it wrong. If she knew anything of human nature she would feel that as long as men love they *forgive* everything, but the moment it is over they discover fifty things on which to ground a

plausible, and perpetual implacability. She could not renew it, and this she knows, but she is quite right to reserve a point for vanity.

In her last, she says: "she shall quit the room, or the house the moment I enter it." I answered that she was to do as she pleased, but that my carriage would be always respectful, and as friendly as she thought proper to allow—an expression I now regret, for she will interpret it into a wish to be again in her trammels, which I neither would nor could. Her letters were still more absurd than ever—telling me she had "perjured herself to Lady C[owper] and Mrs. L[amb]," &c., to whom it seems I betrayed her, &c. (I can safely appeal to *both*, as you will or may discover); and all this was my fault, and so on. Then comes a long account of the bonfire,[1] still more ludicrous than *yours*, full of *yeomanry*, *pages*, *gold chains*, basket of flowers, herself, and all other fooleries.

L^d^ O[xford] goes to town on Saturday next, and we shall follow him the week, or fortnight after. In the meantime write to me; we are very quiet and happy; but I shall certainly attend to what you say on travelling "en famille."

Believe me, dear L^dy^ M., Ever y^rs^, B.

P.S.—I just hear that *we* shall not be in town before the 20th.

December 31*st*, 1812.

My dear L^dy^ M.,—I have received several epistles from C., which I have answered as seemed best at y^e^ time. She has at last said that she heard of the proposal, but is ignorant to whom. I have owned it, but not added any names of any parties concerned, though by this she probably knows, and it is quite as well she should.

Her letters are as usual full of contradictions, and *less* truth (if possible) than ever. My last answer, which was good-natured enough, but rather more facetious

[1] At Brocket.

than befits her taste, has produced a pettish rejoinder. She has again written to L^dy O[xford], but quietly and cunningly.

She has sent me a banker's receipt for some money she swears she owes me, but which I will have nothing to do with. I have returned it, and if the money is not removed from Hoare's and my name withdrawn, I shall most assuredly despatch it with her compliments, one half to the Magdalen Asylum, and the other to St. Luke's[1] as a donation, and return in kind for her bonfire. If she will play the fool, I rather think I shall be seized with a fit of repartee, which will not be very "soothing." This I beg you will hint as to the disposal of this money. It is of no use to try "soothing" with so detestable a disposition, and my patient stands marvellously in need of repose. If Mr. N. is one of her confidants I regret it; against him I have no enmity but through her means. I was once before nearly involved in a dispute, and not improbably shall again. I do wish she would consider what the consequences may be of this perpetual system of irritation on my temper. I begin to look upon her as actually mad, or it would be impossible for me to bear what I have from her already.[2]

We have no *news* here, and you do not know me well if you suppose I covet them. I shall not entertain you with a long list of *attributes*, but merely state that I have not been guilty of once *yawning* in the eternity of two months under the same roof—a phenomenon in my history. We go on admirably in y^e *country*; but how town may suit us I cannot foresee.

I hear L^dy H[olland] is *not* pleased with my present place of abode—no bad reason for liking it better myself. WE shall have no quarrels about my visits to you, for you are a great favourite, though suspected of *undue influence* (which you deserve), and were it otherwise, after your firm adherence to my cause, I

[1] Hospital for Lunatics, Old Street Road.

[2] All this shows the absurdity of Lady Caroline Lamb's letter to Medwin in 1824. See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 451.

neither would nor could desert your banners, unless dismissed by your own express request.

I sent you so long a letter the other day on y^e^ subject of the P[rinces]s, that I shall now no further trespass on your Xmas amusements than by wishing they may be pleasantly prolonged for the present, and often renewed hereafter. This is the last day of the year. I shall hope to hear from you soon in the next, and, like the Spaniards, hope you "may live a thousand."

Ever y^rs^, d^r^ L^dy^ M., B.

CHAPTER IV

CORRESPONDENCE WITH LADY MELBOURNE

(1813)

[Eywood] *January 4th*, 1813.

My dear L^dy M.,—The passage I allude to contains these words at the end of a long tirade, "which, God forgive me, I solemnly denied." On looking again, I find it is "denied with a solemn oath." I am now tolerably aware from herself and others of her late proceedings. Her last epistle was really not in y^e language of a gentlewoman on the subject of my resumption of my picture, after, however, restoring her *own*.

I should esteem it as a great favour if you would once more speak to Caroline from me. Again and again I repeat that I have no wish to disturb her, nor am at all conscious of having misrepresented her, or indeed mentioned her name but to those to whom she had already committed herself. Once more I beseech her, for her own sake, to remain quiet; and having done this for the *last* time, I must add that if this is disregarded, it will be out of my *power* to prevent consequences *fatal* to her, perhaps to others also, and which I most sincerely wish to avoid. She forgets that *all* does not depend upon me, and she is not aware that I have done my utmost to silence some whose narratives would not be very pleasing.

Remind her that the same man she is now trying by every serious and petty means to exasperate, is the same who received the warmest thanks from herself and L^dy B[essborough] on the occasion of her Kensington

excursion,[1] one with whose conduct she has repeatedly professed herself perfectly satisfied, and who did not give her up till he was assured that he was not abandoning a woman to her fate, but restoring her to her family. I have particular reasons for wishing her to be once more *warned*. If this is not attended to I shall remain *passive*, and interfere no further between her and her destiny. However disagreeable to myself, the effects, I fear, will be worse for her. She is perfectly at liberty to dispose of her necklaces &c. to "Grimaldi" if she pleases, and to put whatever motto she may desire on her "livery buttons." This last she will understand, but as you probably may not, it is as well to say, that one of her amusements, by her own account, has been engraving on the said "buttons" *Ne* "Crede Byron," an interesting addition to the motto of my family, which thus atones for its degradation in my acquaintance with her. I however do not think it very creditable to *yours* to have the above proclaimed to every lacquey who meets her ladyship's couriers in their respectable vocations, and fear that the appearance of the *name* may lead to errors in the translation of the *learned* of the *livery*. This is her own account, and may therefore probably be false, which you will not regret.

We shall leave this about the 15th. We have had no Sir R^d *anybody* here (I can't read the name), but I am glad to hear of C.'s reconciliation with the Bart. His second blunder will not be so lucky as the first, I fear—that is their concern.

Her "real good spirits" I rejoice to hear, notwithstanding her efforts to spoil mine—her own would have been tolerably dashed very lately had it not been for my interposition. I do not mean *here*, however, for the *Enchantress* looks upon her with great coolness since her late epistles, and I do not believe thinks of C. as anything formidable. Besides, the contrast is all in her favour.

[1] When she ran away from Melbourne House and was found and taken home by Lord Byron in August 1812. See *Lord Granville Leveson-Gower's Correspondence*, ii. 348.

We go on without any interruptions or disagreeables —very few guests and no inmates—books, musics, &c., all the amusements without the rigidity of Middleton. I shall be very *qualmish* at the thoughts of returning to town—it is an accursed abode for people who wish to be quiet. I am not sure that I shall not take a journey into Notts before I proceed to town ; but this depends on circumstances.

So you dislike the Secretary's definition of "*Permanency.*" Pray how does *everyone else* like it ? Why should I not believe in all sorts of "Innocence" ? Assure yourself, that my creed on that subject is exactly *your own.*

"Virtue, my dear L^{dy} Blarney, virtue," &c. &c. ; see the "Vicar of Wakefield." Ever y^{rs}, B.

January 5th, 1813.

My dear L^{dy} M.,—I wrote you a long letter yesterday respecting C., and as I did not quite explain what may appear to you a little singular, I will just write this much in addition. I have reason to imagine since she has been making this business so public that it will appear perhaps still more publicly if she is not more prudent—which is the more provoking as the least circumspection on her part would prevent people from thinking of it at all.

You will easily imagine that this would be most disagreeable to me, but how can I prevent it, if she persists in talking on the subject to everyone—*writing* to *Sanders* the Painter, &c. &c. ?

However unpleasant this is to me, it must be more so to the other parties. I believe Lady B. and C. would hardly survive it—it would distress me beyond everything, and destroy all done in her favour. Prevail upon her if possible to consider the probable consequences of her buffooneries. Ever y^{rs}, B.

P.S.—Conceive my having heard of it in this wilderness. L^{d} O. had a long sermon upon it from his mother and *maiden* sisters yesterday who are all as old as

Owen Glendower, and have lived out of the world since Henry 4th's reign.

[Eywood], *January 9th*, 1813.

Dear L^dy M.,—C. by her own confession has *forged* a *letter* in my *name* (the hand she imitates to perfection), and thus obtained from Mr. Murray in Albemarle Street the picture for which I had restored her own.

This fact needs no comment from me, but I wish you could re-obtain it for me, otherwise I very much fear an unpleasant exposure will transpire upon the subject.

She shall have a copy, and all her *own* gifts if she will restore it to *you* for the present. This picture I must have again for several weighty reasons—if not—as she has shown an utter disregard of all *consequences*, I shall follow her example. I am hurried now, as we are all going out, but will write to-morrow, dear L^dy M.

Y^rs ever, B.

January 10th, 1813.

Dear L^dy M.,—This morning I heard from town (inclosed a letter from C. to the person in Albemarle Street) that it was in person she seized upon the picture. Why she should herself say that she *forged* my *name*, &c. &c. to obtain it I cannot tell, but by her letter of yesterday (which I shall keep for the present), she expressly avows this in her wild way and *Delphine* language.

It is singular that she not only calumniates others, but even *herself*, for no earthly purpose.

I wrote to you yesterday in a perilous passion about it, and am still very anxious to recover the picture with which she will certainly commit some foolery.

Murray is in amaze at the whole transaction, and writes in a laughable consternation.

I presume she got it by flinging his own best bound folios at his head.

I am sure since the days of the Dove in the Ark, no animal has had such a time of it as *I*—no rest anywhere.

Once more my Dearest Fum
let me assure you that
I had no hand in the satire
you mention so do not take
affront about nothing but call
where I desired - as to his
refusing you the Picture - it
is quite ridiculous - only name
me or if you like it them
but - this note - that will
suffice - you know my reason
for wishing them not to allow
all who call the same latitude
explain what ever you think

necessary to them or take
which Picture you think
most like but do not forget
to return it the soonest you
can - for reasons I explained.
My Dearest Friend take care
of [illegible] through
[illegible]
Byron

This letter was forged in
my name by Caroline L.
for the purpose of obtaining
a picture from the hand of
Mr M. — January 1813
Byron

As Dogberry says, "this is flat Burglary"—will you recover my *effigy* if you can—it is very unfair, after the restoration of her own, to be *ravished* in this way.

I wanted to scribble to you a long letter, but I am called away again, for which *you* will not be *sorry*—remember C. is responsible for any *errata* in my letter of yesterday—for I sent you her own statement in fewer words.

Dear L^{dy} M., ever y^{rs}, B.

January 11th, 1813.

My dear L^{dy} M.,—So you cannot understand "*everybody*"—well—I thought *anybody* would, but as *somebody* can't—*nobody* will be the wiser. And my "*Cheltenham speeches*"—blessings on your memory!—what were they? They were very sincere I will swear, and if not, you have heard, I doubt not, the ancient and approved saying, viz. that "the most *artful* man is not a match for the most *sincere* woman"; now *we* are just the reverse, and I am used accordingly. I am still in a prodigious pucker about this picture, of which I sent you details yesterday and the day before.

The worthy C. tells me in her last letter that she has now broken all but the 6th and 9th commandments, and threatens to omit the "*not*" in them also, unless I submit to her late larceny.

I have enquired after your Sir R. F., but *we* know no such person; she has changed her opinion about L^{dy} B. A. for Annabella, but has no idea (at least, expresses none) that my *proxy* succeeded no better than if I had done it in *person*, nor who the said *proxy* was.

I shall wait your "story about A." till it suits your pleasure. I suppose it is a good one, and will at all events have the advantage of being well told.

I don't understand you about "what I found fault with at M[iddleton] I should have wished at E[ywood]." Your ladyship is enigmatical—a perfect Sphinx—and I am not Œdipus.

It is now snowing perfect avalanches, and when we

shall get away Jove knows. L[d] O. is in town, and on the 17th we mean to attempt it, with the permission of the skies and roads.

C. may think what she pleases; whether *I* am afraid of her time may show, but L[dy] O. is not, I am very certain.

I rejoice to hear you will be in town, but you don't say whether you will patronize me any further. I am sure you have found me the most submissive of slaves. Don't get *ill*. I see by the papers that poor L[dy] C. Rawdon is dead—a pretty encouragement to fall sick. Bessy will be in black, which does not become her, and will add considerably to the dear soul's affliction, if she at all resembles the rest of what Mrs. Slipslop terms the "frail sect."

We are all in tolerable plight. I have been looking over my Kinsham premises, which are close to a church and churchyard full of the most facetious epitaphs I ever read. "ADUE" (a new orthography taken from one of them). I commend me to your orisons, and ever am,

Dear L[dy] M., Y[rs] most truly, B.

[LONDON], *February 7th*, 1813.

MY DEAR L[DY] M[ELBOURNE],—You perhaps do not know that your amiable charge has at last thought proper to expose herself to Murray. Yesterday, to my utter astonishment, in marches Miss W. (I was present), and says in a tone more audible than requisite, "Mr. M[urray], L[dy] C[aroline] L[amb] desires you will call to-morrow at—God knows where." The man bowed and promised acquiescence; he did not know that she was the picture-woman.

What was I to do? If I said "*Don't go*" to a person who knew nothing of *her*, and who dreamed only of an order for books, &c., he would have thought it very singular that I should forbid the banns between him and his anticipated profits, and inevitably have found out the fact twenty-four hours before the sight of C. confirmed it. The room being full I thought it

best to say nothing. This morning he saw her, and of course recognized the respectable pilferer.

She gave him some *designs* for a certain book, the which I have asked him to return, not only because I have no intention of having drawings for the thing, but (though I did not state to him the last reason) because certainly C.'s are the performances of all others I would rather decline. This is the statement of her last *scene*. What a pity she had no *fête* nor occupation for this *day* as well as the three last!

I am going out of town for a day, to-morrow. I regret this last blunder, since she has been so quiet and silent since her arrival that I trusted our cares were over.

I hear also she behaved to admiration last night; pray Heaven it may be permanent!

You were at the Opera to-night—so was I, but the Isthmus (curse the word, I *can't spell it!*) of two boxes between us was impassable, and prevented our *two seas* from uniting.

Ever, d^r^ Lady M., Yours, B.

February 12th, 1813.

My dear L^dy^ Melbourne,—I shall be very happy to encounter A[nnabella] in such a manner as to convince her that I feel no *pique*, nor diminution of the *respect* I have always felt for her; the latter is perhaps rather increased than otherwise. I do not know whether I really am above the common prejudices which the animal Man entertains on such occasions, but I trust I am above showing them.

All I hope is, that whatever my manner may be, she will neither think me *cold* nor *confident*. I do not wish to seem piqued at the past, nor as a future *aspirant*.

With regard to the P.s,[1] why the thing is to be secret, I cannot see; I have never denied it; if anyone is a sufferer it must be myself, and it is one of those afflic-

[1] Probably an abbreviation of Princess. The Princess of Parallelograms was one of his names for Miss Milbanke.

tions which made me smile when Bankes cried. I shall neither poison nor lampoon her, and am very sure that if she does not misunderstand me nor my views, we shall be very good friends, and "live happy ever after" in that state of life to which it may "please God to call us."

So you have seen Mrs. C.; this is excellent. She sent me an Opera ticket, which I returned, being already engaged; and having paid part of another man's subscription last year, I was the less inclined to add my own for this. I was also invited to her house, for which at present I have no pressing occasion, but I daresay her *friends* will find *it* (and all its furniture) as convenient as ever, should circumstances render that respectable mansion a pleasant place of conference. I only hope it may never cost anyone more than the segment of a *predecessor's* Opera ticket.

I saw you last night, but I was literally jammed in between a cursed card-table and an elbow-chair, so that I could not rise but in the most ungainly of all possible postures, and you are the last person before whom I would appear more awkward in my devoirs than I naturally am.

I trust that Mrs. C. and the *C.* of *C.'s* will not break, it would be an infinite loss to both; on *my* account they certainly shall not. I fear C. will find some further method of exposing herself—I mean in this last affair; any *future* one would be too great a blessing for *me*, and I rather think *you* will leave the *next* entirely to herself.

We have great ideas of going abroad, in which you will heartily concur. I wish I had never left a country with more quiet, and fewer clouds. Everything is so roundabout here—there everything is to be got, or *got rid* of *sans* circumlocution, and much cheaper.

Ever, my dear L^{dy} M., Y^{rs} most truly, B.

February 13th, 1813.

My dear L^{dy} M.,—Tell *her* to *show* you my letters from *Cheltenham*; if *you* are once mentioned otherwise than with praise I will not only eat my words, but the

paper and seal included. My *kind* epistle was written before I either heard of her *folly* or her *felony*; the advertisements I have never seen.

That one so perverted with every wrong feeling should mistake forbearance for fear is to be expected, but if that picture is not restored, and speedily too, the mistake will be unravelled.

I confess I look upon the thing in a more serious light than you do. I have seen the forged billet, the hand very like; now what is to prevent her from the same imitation for any less worthy purpose she may choose to adopt?

M[urray] does not know her name, nor have I *yet* informed him of it; if known, she will have the credit of being the authoress of all the letters *anonymous* and *synonimous* [*sic*] written for the next ten years and the last five.

For aught I know she may have forged 50 such to *herself*, and I do not feel very much refreshed by the supposition. I shall not write to *her* again, but I request once more, as respectfully as I can, that she will restore the picture; if not—as nothing but a scene will satisfy her—she shall have one performed which will be more edifying than entertaining.

You know how anxious I have been to preserve quiet; *what* I have borne from her; I have done this, it should seem, in vain, and henceforth, be the consequence what it may to *me*, to *her* and *hers*, I leave no measures to keep with any but yourself. I am sick of the suspense, and one way or the other it shall soon be over.

My offer to recover the things was in consequence of a foolish, but conciliatory letter of her own—this I now revoke.

L^{dy} B[essborough]'s letter is very amusing. I had no idea that L^{dy} O[xford] and *suite* were of such consequence, but how far the *assurer* was right I cannot say—at least more than I did to *you* already. The voyage does not depend on me; that they have such an intention is true; how it transpired I know not, but "don't

know," and "haven't heard," will make a very pretty response from you on being catechised.

I shall be in town in a few days, and hope to see you there, *and the picture.*

Dear L^{dy} M., ever y^{rs}, B.

February 22nd, 1813.

Dear L^{dy} M.,—I see nothing but the prospect of an endless correspondence in answering L^{dy} C.'s letters; assure her of my good wishes, and let it end.

Lady B[essborough] was at home this morning, and after *mutually* promising that neither "*would believe one word the other had to say*," much civil upbraiding took place. She lectured pleasantly upon "Soothing," complained that I had deceived *you* and Mrs. L[amb] &c. into a belief that I was a "sober, quiet, Platonic, well-disposed person," added that you was "the best and cleverest of all possible women," which was very lucky, inasmuch if she had said you was y^{e} worst, you would probably have heard it again.

She was a good deal horrified at my deficiency in *Romance*, and quite petrified at my behaviour altogether, more especially the affair of that never sufficiently to be confounded necklace, which ought not to have been given away a second time (for want of *precedent*, I presume), and which certainly has been more celebrated than any similar collar since the famous one of the "Cardinal de Rohan's." The result of all this is, that I shall restore the brilliant epistles, and get back the baubles, which (God knows) I was most unwilling to receive.

To L^{dy} C.'s good resolutions I have nothing to say, but my fervent prayer to Asmodeus that they may continue.

That my opinion upon her character should alter, is neither to be *desired* nor expected. I will *forbear* as much as possible, but . . . I have already sent her the requested absolutions and remissions; why must I repeat them?

In short I wish to hear no more of the matter; to

be on good terms with "*you* by *yourself you*," and to remain as quiet as Medea and her Dragons will allow me.

I wish to see you, but do not let me intrude. I fear I did yesterday. To-day I am twenty-five years of age, and yours for as many centuries, dear L^dy M., &c. &c. B.

P.S.—L^dy B. says *you* fear a renewal. Now this is impossible, and that you should think so, still more incomprehensible.

February 25th, 1813.

MY DEAR L^DY M[ELBOURNE],—Her letter is "melancholy and *gentlemanlike*." You know she does not always write like a *gentle-woman*, and the contents of no great importance. The interview is put off for certain weeks, and I shall not hasten it, however much I may wish to regain my letters and other fooleries.

The idea of meeting you was a great *temptation* to L^y Cowper's the other night; but I resist temptation better than I used to do, which you will be glad to hear.

I am just from the H[ouse] of C[ommons], where Plunket made the best speech *I* ever heard,[1] and one Master Tomlin the worst, which I did not hear, having had recourse (after patiently listening to a very commonplace beginning) to supper for a pleasanter conclusion.

As you are a bitter politician you won't dislike this parliamentary gossip.

Good night.

Ever y^rs most truly, B.

[1] William Conyngham Plunket (1764–1854) entered the Irish Parliament as Member for Charlemont in 1798 and opposed the project of Union. In 1807 he entered the House of Commons as Member for Midhurst, but resigned two months later. He re-entered Parliament in 1812 as a supporter of Lord Grenville. He succeeded Grattan as foremost champion of Catholic emancipation, and created a great impression by his speeches. In 1827 he was created Baron Plunket. After having been Lord Chancellor of Ireland, he retired into private life in 1841.

February 28th, 1813.

My dear L^dy M[elbourne],—I shall probably leave town in less than a fortnight, and, in all probability, shall not return, but for a day or two before my purposed voyage. To *you* I may say that I see no good that can result from this eternal conference, and if possible I shall avoid it. I have given up all expectation of the letters, or anything like fair dealing from such a quarter. In my answer it was hinted that a little reflection might probably induce her to give up the idea. If we are to meet only with indifference or hatred (I know no other alternative, at least in *our* case), why meet at all? and then my Lady Bl. with her eternal tremors—she is foolish in this respect. The requested "forgiveness" you and I have both *said* forty times at least. There is something to forgive, and a little to forget on both sides. I am not very apt at either, but as the remembrance is not very pleasing I shall try to dismiss it, and as for the *forgiveness* I am willing to *say* it as often as she pleases, but I have not the wish, and sincerely hope I may never have the opportunity to put it to the trial, for my feelings are not, I fear, thoroughly *English* as to the charities, and I should be loath to trust my *magnanimity*—the least durable of all mortal qualities.

"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," says some pious person, who, if he had known more of the world, would have found out that we can't "resist him," and that the best way is to anticipate his flight by our own. I am not afraid of the *charms* of the fair Phryne, but I do dread by some word or inadvertence discovering a *dislike* (to term it gently) which were better concealed—for after all I am no actor.

Ever yours, dear Lady M., B.

P.S.—The opera box is given up, which I do not much regret, and I go out nowhere, so that you and I are not likely to encounter during the remnant of my sojourn in town. I shall, however, pay my parting devoirs at Whitehall, and you will now and then write to me

in the country, and perhaps even to one more distant. If your son has left Sicily any other branch of the family he may have left to flourish there I shall value in proportion to its lawful or unlawful resemblance to yourself.

March 13th, 1813.

DEAR LADY M.,—Will you have the goodness to forward the enclosed? It contains a request for the picture and a *hint* at the letters. I wish to make this one more effort, which may succeed. I shall make you blush by asking you if you have read the *perjuries* in the Morning Post with the immaculate deposition of the Lady Douglas. Much good will the publication add to the rising marriageables of this innocent Metropolis, and I doubt not that for the rest of the nineteenth century everybody will be "satisfied with only Sir John."

It is rather hard however on the poor knight that he should be transmitted down to all posterity as the very type of insufficiency and a byeword of bad evidence. "Laud we the gods! these be truths," as one Shakespeare says. Pray forgive me—or rather the Morning Post and Herald. You are well again—at least I won't suppose you otherwise.

Ever, dear Lady M., Your obliged servitor, B.

March 14th, 1813.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—It has not been well managed; she wrote a submissive and *denying* letter to Lady O., who at first seemed disposed to agree to the interview, but on further consideration, and having interim heard more of her abuse (which I think you are not unacquainted with) she answered shortly and not uncivilly in the negative.

My wish that Lady O. should be the third person was to save you a scene, and I confess also—odd as it may seem—that it would have been less awkward for me. You will wonder why,—and I can't tell you more than that she might make some brilliant harangue to which

—— would be a less embarrassed listener than you could possibly be. The letter you may read and put in the fire or keep as you please. I did and do not want the picture, but if she will adhere to her present silence, I shall not tempt her into further scribbling.

You will at least allow I have gained one point. I shall get away without seeing her at all—no bad thing for the original whatever may become of the copy. I have no pretensions to "diplomacy," possessing only one requisite, viz. adhering closely to my instructions.

You are quite right as *usual* upon the subject of being governed; in that respect I consider myself a competent witness.

It will be very cruel if Sir Sidney turns Regent-evidence after the compliment to his prowess in L^{dy} D.'s deposition.[1] Poor Sir John seems in a pretty dilemma as the matter now stands; he is perjured if he publishes such a letter as you describe; methinks he will resemble one Sir Pandarus of Troy, of convenient memory, except in betraying his trust. The Smith family must also be uneasy, for if Sir Sidney's head is taken off it may be doubted how far the remainder may be useful at home or abroad. So you won't get well?—you must —or what is to become of me? I am very selfish about you. Ever y^{rs}, d^{r} L^{dy} M., B.

P.S.—She wrote to L^{y} O. desiring to see *her*, and I thought it as well to *lump* the interviews into one, and cut you out as the *third*, for reasons below mentioned.

[4, Bennet Street, St. James'] *March 15th*, 1813.

My dear L^{dy} M.,—I read the note (for letter it was not) in which there was *no mention* nor *allusion* to any females of any family whatever. I would not have allowed such an epistle to go; besides, whatever L^{y} O. may have thought, I am certain she entertains no

[1] In 1813 the Princess of Wales made great efforts to be allowed to associate with her child Princess Charlotte, but her request was not granted. In 1806 Sir John and Lady Douglas deposed that in 1802 she had a child by Sir Sidney Smith, but a formal commission of enquiry exonerated her.

such notions at present. The last sentence in it I erased, because it expressed *pity* for C., and I wished to spare her that humiliation. This assertion then is a gross and malignant falsehood of your correspondent's to make more mischief. Pray burn my letter; at any rate do not send it. I now recall my intention of complying with her request, and will *not meet her*. Her depositions really rival L^y^ D.'s. I am so provoked at this last piece of malice, that I really am not fit to write a line. I will call soon, and hope to find you well. Believe me, if L^y^ O. entertained or expressed such opinions of you or yours, we should quickly quarrel. I would not hear those who have treated me with forbearance and kindness traduced even by her, and I certainly like her better than anything on earth.

Ever y^rs^, d^r^ L^y^ M., B.

[4, BENNET STREET, ST. JAMES'] *March 18th*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^DY^ M.,—If I had gone to Mrs. Hope's, I should have found the only "novelty" that would give me any pleasure, in yourself, and lately, I am sorry to say, you have become quite a *rarity*; even more so than the subsidiary viands which you mention, and which are not amiss, in their way, as additions to a supper conversation. But then I should have been checkmated by the L^y^ Blarney, who ranks next to a breast of veal, an earwig, and her own offspring amongst my antipathies.

"After all there is a charm in novelty." Is there, indeed? It is very wicked in you to say so to a person who is so bigoted to the opposite system.

I believe I leave town next week. In the meantime I am in the agonies of three different schemes. The *first* you know, the second is Sligo's Persian plan—he wants me to wait till September, set off and winter at Athens (our old headquarters) and then in the Spring to Constantinople (as of old), and Bagdad, and Tahiran. This has its charms, too, and recalls one's predilections for gadding. Then there is Hobhouse, with a Muscovite and Eastern proposal also; so that I am worse

off than ever ass was before, to which bundle of hay I shall address myself.

However, I am going somewhere, though my agents want me to stay where I am—an additional reason for desiring to get away.

I am hiring doctors, painters, and two or three stray Greeks, now here, and as tired of England as myself, and I have found a trusty vassal in one of Buonaparte's Mameluke Guard, who will go with Sligo or myself. These I am measuring for uniforms, shoes, and inexpressibles without number, and quite overwhelmed with preparations of all sorts. As soon as I get me to the country, I shall cherish once more my dear mustachios —with whom I parted in tears—and trust they will now have the good manners to grow blacker than they did formerly, and assume the true Ottoman twist, of which your Hussars are deplorably ignorant.

I now recollect C.'s letter ; let it come if it will come, and let her stay, which will be better.

Ever, dear L^y^ M., Y^rs^, B.

[4, Bennet Street, St. James'] *March 26th*, 1813.

My dear L^dy^ M[elbourne],—It becomes you wonderfully to reproach me for *fussing* about *trifles*, after the lectures of last summer about things of no great importance. I send you, nevertheless, the precious addition, though I already gave you enough to make a peruque—and now pray let me lay hands upon the picture immediately. It is too bad in C. to raise up the ghosts of my departed vows against me. She made me sign I know not what, or how, many *bonds*, and now, like a Jew, she exacts usurious interest for an illegal transaction.

Pray promise anything, and I will promise you everything—copies, originals, what you please—but let me have the picture forthwith.

I leave town on Sunday, I believe[1] and shall not write to her again without some further epistle arrives

[1] For Eywood.

requiring response. As I can't go to Lady Spencer's, would you make some decent excuse there for me? But that would not be proper, now I think of it; and yet she is one of very few people from whom I don't like to exclude myself altogether. I must say I am ill. I shall call to-morrow or Saturday, to take a temporary leave of you. I must return to town on business, perhaps very soon.

I certainly am indebted to C. for the continuance of your *countenance*, and this cancels all her libels and larcenies, and makes me even hear L^dy B[essborough]'s name without being very sick, besides making me admire Mrs. G[eorge] L[amb], and all the rest of the family.

Ever y^rs, dear L^dy M., B.

[EYWOOD, PRESTEIGN] *April 5th*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^DY M[ELBOURNE],—If in town at all I shall only remain a few days, and it will not be in my power to see L^dy C[aroline]. She has fairly worn out my wish to please or displease her. If she sends you the picture, keep it; but for the love of quiet let me hear no more of or *from* her. I shall not open any letter from her in future; therefore do not send me the Sunday's dispatch, or any future packet, unless from *yourself*. The charm of the ring exists only in her own malignant imagination—every ring was *English*. I recollect something of a Comboloio, or Turkish rosary of amber beads, which I gave to her, to which she attached some absurd mystery, but the rings (among others a *wedding* one which she *bestowed* upon *herself*, and insisted on my placing it on her finger) were all the manufacture of a Bond Street artist, who certainly was no conjuror.

I cannot break my *promise*. Pray say at once, and once for all, that I have nothing more to say, to see, or to do on the subject, and nothing but a wish to make her act right in giving up what she ought not to retain, would have induced me to submit so long to the *fragments* of her yoke, and hear the clanking of the last links of a chain for ever broken.

I have much to do and little time to do it in; certainly not an instant to spare to a person for whom the iron (to use her own metaphor) retains all the *heat*, but none of the flexibility. I give up pictures, letters, &c., to her tender mercies; let that satisfy her. The detestation, the utter abhorrence I feel at part of her conduct I will neither shock you with, nor trust myself to express. That feeling has become a part of my nature; it has poisoned my future existence. I know not whom I may love, but to the latest hour of my life I shall hate that woman. Now you know my sentiments; they will be the same on my death-bed. To her I do not express this, because I have no desire to make her uncomfortable; but such is the state of my mind towards her, for reasons I shall not recur to, and beg to be spared from meeting her until we may be chained together in Dante's Inferno.

The *date* ring you shall have if you like it, the others have been transferred to Charlotte Harley,[1] whom I should love for ever if she could always be only eleven years old, and whom I shall probably marry when she is old enough, and bad enough to be made into a modern wife.

We have had very few fine days, and these I have passed on the water and in the woods, scrambling and splashing about with the children, or by myself. I always feel happier here or at Newstead than elsewhere, and all my plagues are at least 150 miles off, a distance, unfortunately, not quite sufficient to exempt me from their persecution.

But I am writing to you at greater length than I ought for your pleasure. I shall endeavour to get a glimpse of you before I go, but for C. you have my ultimatum.

The thing you mention reminds me of the *Nun* (L^dy Heathcote told me last year I ran away with) and

[1] Lady Charlotte Harley, a daughter of Lady Oxford, the "Ianthe" of *Childe Harold*.

a Mr. Landor's [1] tragedy, the reputation of which I was obliged to bear this winter.

> "And then for mine obligingly mistakes
> The first lampoon Sir Will or Bubo [makes;]"

so said the poet, whom I resemble in nothing but the destiny expressed in the above couplet.

Could I have kept such a secret from you? or any secret? I suppose there is somebody I like abused in it, that I am charged with the authorship—and then the *character* you send is such an inducement to wear his bays. I presume it is anony[mous].

[Remainder torn off.]

April 7th, 1813.

My dear L^dy M[elbourne],—"You have gotten y^e picture!!" Now, do not on any account allow it to be taken out of your hands, where it will remain, very much to the refreshment of the original. Copies, &c., I leave to your discretion.

The *double* hair amuses you—she will never discover the difference, and of *course you* cannot know it, or tell it. It was a lucky coincidence of colour and shape for my purpose, and may never happen again, and surely it is a very innocent revenge for some very scurvy behaviour. It grieves me, however, that L^y Blarney will never be able to lift up her eyes and hands on y^e occasion as heretofore; it is worthy of her own school, in which, had I been earlier initiated, I should have been an adept. I believe you are right about C. and the "Giaour," but Mrs. L[amb] astonishes me. "*Pale*,"—what has that to do with it? it is merely the distinction of all Europeans—comparatively speaking—from an Asiatic. It is rather hard upon me, that all my poetical personages must be identified with the

[1] Robert Eyres Landor, younger brother of Walter Savage Landor. He was author of a tragedy, *Count Arezzi*, which was supposed to have been written by Byron. He died in 1869.

writer, and just as fair as if Dr. Moore[1] must be Zeluco, or Milton (begging pardon for mentioning such men in the same sentence with myself) the Devil.

I have received her letter, and but for a circumstance not worth relating, should have returned it. After a good deal of flattery, and something of abuse, she concludes by terming me "the greatest villain that ever existed." My opinion of her I expressed in my last, and the *effect* of her conduct upon my feelings. This I cannot revoke, but will not repeat.

The Duchess of M!! By the blessing of Diana, all our footmen and gardeners are frightful. I write with m'amie very near me; if she looks over my shoulder, the foregoing paragraph will be a proper reward for peeping, and I scribble it on purpose.

I still adhere to my resolution of not conferring with your "*Scorpion*," but do not let this induce you to part with my property. I am by no means sure that I shall be in town at all, but if so, incog. to embrace you and L^dy *Holland* before my voyage. Your letters are delightful, particularly the parts *not* about Caroline, but *Carolus*. I wish he had exchanged heads with your Regent *Log* with all my heart, or that they were *stitched together*; what an admirable Janus of a fool and a knave. I take C[harles the First] to be the greatest *king* (that is, villain) that ever lived. Our family got a peerage, and lost everything else for the Stuarts, and my mother was their lineal descendant (from James 2nd of *Scotland's* daughter), all the bad blood in my own composition I derive from those bastards of Banquo.

Believe me, dear L^y M., Ever y^rs most truly, B.

P.S.—On the other side see some *mild* verses.

[1] Dr. John Moore (1729–1802), physician and man of letters. He travelled with the 8th Duke of Hamilton between 1772–8. Published *Zeluco*. In 1795 Moore published an account of the French Revolution.

TO THE *DISCOVERER* OF THE BODIES OF CHARLES I. AND HENRY VIII.

Famed for their civil and domestic quarrels,
See heartless Henry lies by a headless Charles!
Between them stands another sceptred *thing*,
It lives—it reigns, "ay, every inch a king?"
Charles to his people—Henry to his wife,
The double tyrant starts at once to life.
Justice and Death have mixed their dust in vain,
Each royal vampire quits his vault again.
Curst be the tomb that could so soon disgorge
Two such, to make a Janus or a George!"

Will you give L^d^ Holland—or anybody you like, or dislike—a copy of this; but I suppose you will be *tender* or *afraid*: you need not mind any *harm* it will do me.

[EYWOOD] *April 19th*, 1813.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—I rejoice to hear, for the fiftieth time, of C.'s reformation, and am inclined to think it permanent, from the silence in that quarter, whence I have not been disturbed for the last fortnight. In a few weeks I shall be beyond her correspondence, and in the meantime, shall take care not to renew it.

I leave this place in a day or two for London, where I shall remain in obscurity for a week or two.

We are at present in a slight perplexity, owing to an event which certainly did not enter into my calculations; what it is, I leave to your own ingenious imagination, which will not let one off for a little, I am sure.

I am not quite certain that I shall embark in the same ship, but I shall sail nearly at the same time, and join them—unless the vicinity of Greece should be too tempting for so vagrant a personage.

The approbation of your Duchess is very obliging! If she really wants your copy, I will give you another with pleasure.

As to C., I do not know to what she alludes; the thing in question, the "Giaour," was written some time ago, and printed when you had it. Lately I have had

neither time nor inclination to scribble, far less to publish.

I asked L^y O. if she had seen your satire, and she tells me she has neither seen nor heard of it. I wonder that any of those *young* ladies you mention should be attacked, and still more that I should be presumed the assailant; the mention of any of their names might preserve me from the charge. If C. gets hold of the "Giaour" she will bring it in "Wilful murder" against the author; and if she discovers that the hair was that of her "dearest Aspasia," I question whether Medusa's would not be more agreeable. I have a long arrear of mischief to be even with that amiable daughter of L^y B[essborough]'s, and in the long run I shall pay it off, by instalments. I consider this as payment the first for the bonfire, a debt too heavy to discharge all at once. After all, if from this hour I were never to hear her name mentioned, at least from herself, I should be too happy to let her off with all her laurels, but if she recommences hostilities, I have no protection against her madness but my own foolery—and I shall avail myself of my cap and bells accordingly.

How is the L^y Blarney? If that sagacious person knew how matters stand just at present, I think her alarms would be at rest for ever. If ever I were again smitten in that family it would be with herself, and not C.; but hatred is a much more delightful passion, and never cloys; it will make us all happy for the rest of our lives.

Believe me, dear L^y M., Ever yours, B.

April 22nd, 1813.

My dear Lady M[elbourne],—I thought the silence would not last; it has been broken, and in an epistle somewhat longer than a maiden speech or a matron's letter ought to be. However, the tone is less harsh, and consequently it grieves me "who pleads so well, should ever plead in vain." It is the particular request of "several persons of distinction," that this plaguy conference should not take place, and just at

present it is highly expedient that their wishes should meet a ready compliance, and my inclination being, luckily, on the same side, I am glad to have the excuse for following it. A "bird in hand is worth two in a bush," says the approved saw; if so, two birds in hand are probably worth more than any given bird in a bush, particularly if the said bird has been in hand already, and has pecked one's fingers into the bargain.

I am directed by C. to send my answer to you; pray fight off this interview for me if you can, as I am pledged to avoid it; and surely you all agree with me how much better it is to allow me to depart in peace. C. is coming to town. I am glad of it, as far as regards myself; she will immediately take a new turn, and I think there is no chance of our encountering during my stay there. She tells me they want ninety guineas for copying the picture; the original cost but seventy-five, and that was fifty too much. It is rather hard that *you* must pay for her pilferings nevertheless.

On Sunday I expect to be in London, but as privately and quietly as I can. I have a good deal of business to get through during the ensuing fortnight. The rest of our family [1] go to Cheltenham till the vessel is ready; mine will be a separate embarkation.

I see no use in answering her letter. Having lately lived with common-sensible people, these heroics are too *Devonshire* for me. Besides, I am very busy educating my future wife, and look upon the epistle of another's spouse with a prophetic twinge that makes me feel like Moody in the "Country Girl." I leave you to deal with C.—or *double* deal with her; she has no right to anything like candour from anyone, and from me the most she can desire, and more than she deserves, is—silence.

Believe me, dear L^{dy} M., Ever y^{rs}, B.

[LONDON] *April—May 2nd*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^{Y} M.,—The illness of Mr. Hobhouse's stepmother has spoiled our party.

[1] Lord and Lady Oxford.

Your invitation is tempting in various ways:—firstly, I never yet dined at M[elbourne] House—there is *novelty*; secondly, I never expected that Lord M. at all events would be my inviter—there is *surprise*; thirdly, the pleasure of meeting you, which is neither novel, nor surprising, but something better than both; and fourthly, I am rather hungry, having lived on tea and bread and butter ever since I left E[ywoo]d (where I was under the necessity of conforming to a less eremitical regimen), and should do justice to your viands. Yet I must resist all these, though I can't very well say why, unless it be that I am in a very solitary mood, and quite unfit for so much good company. Will you therefore make my most humble apologies to your lord and *master*?—I won't say, excuse me, to *you*—for you will do that very readily.

L^dy [Oxford ?] at last thinks it as well to allow the conference, for fear, I believe, of being dragged herself into some scene, and put in peril by the scissors, or bodkin of the enemy.

And here hath been, in the city of London, a female cousin of mine going for her health (and a husband, which is the same thing) to the Bermudas—wanting to have last words with all her relatives, and me amongst the number, which I have declined. It is very odd the fuss the people make about partings; when I went abroad last time it was without any of these things, which are much better avoided if they like one another, and if they do not, what purpose can they answer?

Your friend Kolfkovsky[1] was with me yesterday, complaining of the English husbands and the restrictions upon their wives, with whom he appears to have made little progress, but lays it all upon the *husbands*. I was obliged to comfort him with an assurance that the fault was all his own, and that husbands and wives are much the same here as elsewhere; it was impossible to hear them so traduced with patience. Talking

[1] Prince Kozlovsky, Russian Minister at Turin, and afterwards resided in Rome. See *Letters and Journals*, iii. 23.

of patience, puts me in mind of the thing you asked for, which I send, but remember you asked me for it *this time*, and don't accuse me of inflicting my rimé upon you without compassion.

Believe me, y^{rs} most truly, B.

Byron to Lady Caroline Lamb

4, BENNET ST., *April 29th*, 1813.

If you still persist in your intention of meeting me in opposition to the wishes of your own friends and of mine, it must even be so. I regret it and acquiesce with reluctance. I am not ignorant of the very extraordinary language you have held not only to me but others, and your avowal of your determination to obtain what you are pleased to call "revenge"; nor have I now to learn that an incensed woman is a dangerous enemy.

Undoubtedly, those against whom we can make no defence, whatever they say or do, must be formidable. Your words and actions have lately been tolerably portentous, and might justify me in avoiding the demanded interview, more especially as I believe you to be fully capable of performing all your menaces, but as I once hazarded everything *for* you, I will not shrink *from* you. Perhaps I deserve punishment, if so, you are quite as proper a person to inflict it as any other. You say you will "*ruin* me." I thank you, but I have done that for myself already; you say you will "destroy me," perhaps you will only save me the trouble. It is useless to reason with you—to repeat what you already know, that I have in reality saved you from utter and impending destruction. Everyone who knows you knows this also, but they do not know—as yet—what you may and I will tell them as I now tell you, that it is in a great measure owing to this persecution; to the accursed things you have said; to the extravagances you have committed, that I again adopt the resolution of quitting this country.

In your assertions you have either belied or betrayed me—take your choice ; in your actions you have hurt only yourself—but is that nothing to one who wished you well ? I have only one request to make, which is, not to attempt to see Lady O. : on her you have no claim. You will settle as you please the arrangement of this conference. I do not leave England till June, but the sooner it is over the better. I once wished, for your own sake, Lady M. to be present—but if you are to fulfil any of your threats in word or deed we had better be alone.

Yours, B.

On cover.

Dear Lady M.,—Will you read, wafer or seal and send the inclosed answer to an epistle of your Agnus, in which she menaces me with her "ghost"—which I long to see ; if she is but half as fractious there (where you please) as *here*, they will be glad to remit her to this world.

Ever y^rs^, B.

May 2nd, 1813.

May 7th, 1813.

My dear L^dy^ M.,—I passed your house with y^e^ intention of calling, but seeing a carriage, I would not disturb you, and possibly drive away some of your near and dear relations, as generally happens upon my intrusion.

It is impossible for me to guess "the long story" about the picture, but it is doubtless some new foolery of C.'s ; you need not take y^e^ trouble to tell it, let her amuse herself. I wished to have had it again, because another *paramount* personage has taken a fancy to have *that* picture at all events, but I meant the one now in their possession for you—indeed, it is the best of the two, for it was done some years before. As to C., she is so far out of the question, that I would rather throw it into the fire, and the original after, than leave it in her possession, if it could be avoided.

I MUST see you at Sir *Joshua's*,[1] though I don't much like venturing on the sight of *seventeen*; it is bad enough *now*, and must have been *worse then*. The painter was not so much to blame as you seem to imagine by adding a few years; he foresaw you would lose nothing by them.

On Wednesday I leave town—it is exactly the same to me morning or evening; the less light the better, either for quarrels or reconciliations. But I once more enter my protest against C.'s meeting me at all; it will end in some ludicrous scene. You must be present; it will make you laugh, which will be some consolation.

I am asked to L^dy Spencer's to-night, but have doubts about going, for I have an invitation to a *city* or rather citizen's ball, where I wish to see the young people unmuzzled; and as Hobhouse is going, who is a cynic after my own heart, I shall be regaled with his observations, which may be safely made, as we are both mere spectators. I *can't* dance, and he *won't*.

I shall contrive to be at L^y S[pencer]'s first if possible, solely and entirely to see you, and *not* to hear about C. if you can help it. I am sure it is a sickening subject to both.

Ever, d^r L^y M^e, Y^rs, B.

May 9th, 1813.

MY DEAR L^DY M^E,—At nine be it then, but I still retain my opinion, and act entirely on the judgment of others.

I have been so often the dupe of everyone with whom I ever was connected, and have so little reason to credit the assertions of L^y C., that I hear of her indisposition with some degree of scepticism. If she really is unwell, *all* that L^dy C. has done to destroy my regard will

[1] A portrait of Lady Melbourne by Sir Joshua Reynolds when she was in her eighteenth year. The picture represents Lady Melbourne holding in her arms her eldest son, Peniston Lamb.

VISCOUNTESS MELBOURNE

AND HER ELDEST SON PENISTON LAMB

After the picture by Sir Joshua Reynolds, P.R.A.

not prevent my feeling much regret, and sincerely wishing her recovery.

Believe me, my dear L^y M., B.

May 14th, 1813.

My dear L^dy M.,—Say what you please in answer to the letter addressed to us—it is all very well.

I am in some anxiety in consequence of a letter from C[heltenha]m this morning; *she*[1] has burst a small blood-vessel, and is weak and ill; all which she attributes to "me and my friends in town!!" I presume it will end in an indisposition, which, however unpleasant for a time, would eventually be a great *relief* to both.

It is very odd that all the women of my acquaintance abuse R[oge]rs; C.'s letter is full of it, and L^y [Oxford]'s fuller.

Her malady is perhaps a "ruse," but at all events, it will probably take me from town next week, very much to the detriment of my temporal and *spiritual* concerns.

I shan't have spirits to tell you my stories this even, unless seeing you restores them; your conversation is really *champagne* to them.

C.'s platonic speculations are all nonsense; we began in that way before, and they ended in—all this uproar.

I can't help being amused at "your permission to *see me* on my return." I suppose you trust in the plague, or a tempest, or L^y O[xford] to sweep me from the earth before that occurs.

Ever, d^r L^y M^e, Y^rs, B.

May 21st, 1813.

Dear L^y M^E,—I shall be with you at L^y C.'s (to whom I request you will present my inexcusable excuses) before seven, that we may form a compact body for y^e expedition.

[1] Lady Oxford.

I have unfortunately dined for the week yesterday, and if Kovlovsky would follow my example in that respect, we should be less squeezed in our respective positions this evening.

Ever y^rs, B.

May 24th, 1813.

My dear L^y M^E,—I had a card for y^e L^y S^h's this evening, but I was engaged in taking leave of Mr. Hobhouse, who quits us for y^e Continent to-morrow, and whom it is not very probable I shall see again; he is y^e oldest, indeed y^e only friend I have, and my regrets are equally *social* and *selfish*, for if I had attended to his advice, I should have been anything but what I am—and in parting with him, I lose "a guide, philosopher and friend" I neither *can* nor *wish* to replace.

Now for our everlasting theme. . . . . I think *terror* must be y^e order of y^e day—suspicion on your part will maintain discipline, and believe me it will not be misplaced. You know my situation. I have no excuse which would be offered in a court of law or even of honour. But if a woman will force her way in defiance of everything, even against y^e remonstrance and request of her *fool*, the said fool has no chance but running away, which at present does not happen to suit the springs of her puppet. I am not y^e dupe of her pretended passion. I see it is totally selfish—she is a right woman, with all the courage to dare, but not to suffer—the hardihood of guilt united to the fear of shame, the passions of an *Oriental* without her spirit, in short, the oddest antithesis of pipe- and common-clay that ever was compounded since the first husband betook himself to stealing apples, and begetting heirs to his own vexations in this world and (I hope for his pains and the truth of y^e Pentateuch) his utter d—mnation in y^e next.

My own situation at this moment is such that without a boast I may say, that perhaps the present *suspense* would be alleviated by the worst *positive*

event that could happen. I am utterly ruined in fortune, and not very brilliant in reputation, sans plan, or prospect of any kind, but of getting out of y^e^ country, with nothing to *hope*, but (by the peculiar patronage of Beelzebub) with little to fear.

> "My greatest comfort is, that now,
> My Dubbolt fortune is so low,
> That either it must quickly end—
> Or turn about again and mend."

You will pardon a quotation from Hudibras.

If she is at all in her senses, she will now pause, if not neither the patience of Job nor the wisdom of Solomon (neither very remarkable by y^e^ bye), could bear or accomplish more than you have long ago done, for y^e^ salvation of a thing not more worth saving.

Ever, d^r^ L^y^ M., y^rs^, B.

P.S.—All my epistles to y^e^ C. must go for nothing, you know there is but one way in which a man can write to ladies afflicted with these phantasies, and to her above all others. I must say, *yes, yes, yes* (like a crier in a country town), to keep her quiet, and to prove to L^y^ B. how *admirably* her "soothing" system succeeds. Silence C. for "three days," and I am *dumb* for ever.

[London] *May 26th*, 1813.

My dear L^y^ M^E^,—By the "*worst possible*" I doubtless meant the event which, for aught I know, may be very probable; as to her remaining with me, that were out of the question. I would not stir a furlong, but patiently wait the wrath of the Blarneys—whom I unfortunately detest too cordially to give them a chance of putting me out of my *then* misery, without doing my best to obtain a fellow-passenger in Charon's hoy. I only expressed the fact that the difficulties in which I am steeped are such as to render any step of hers, or any other female, or male, a matter next to indifference; believe me the idea of our *living together* never entered

into my calculation for a moment. I have no attachment within these two thousand miles ; but I feel some old ones reviving, and I hope I shall yet pray for your prosperity, with my face towards Mecca.

In the meantime L^y^ O[xford] arrives in town to-morrow, which I regret—when people have once fairly parted. How do I abhor these partings ! I know them to be of no use, and yet as painful at the time as the first plunge into purgatory.

All you can say upon *Law* is Gospel, but I am *perdu* —I don't know what you call temporary—Law is eternal. I shall soon, I trust, be where there is none, and where even the wreck of my shattered fortunes will be affluence.

I now heartily rejoice in the escape of your niece.[1] At the time I could not foresee this any more than I could imagine that the means I adopted to extricate myself would have plunged me into that same morass —to prolong your metaphor—in which I am now chin-deep. I trust you will believe that I did not wish to put the lady's philosophy to such a proof. I did not think her wrong then—still less now.

I believe I shall sell Rochdale—for y^e^ sake of another lawsuit, and at a certain loss ; it would quite disappoint me to meet with anything like profit, and as to pleasure, that was all over with me before I was eighteen.

I shall be very sorry not to go as soon as you wish, but I assure you, never did Prudery long more for a lover, than I to be out of a country in which I certainly was not born with my own consent. If, therefore, I am here a month beyond your hopes—and an age beyond my own—pardon me.

Ever yrs., B.

P.S.—C. tells you I said, &c. &c. &c. ! To be sure I did—and will say as much more, and as much more to that, to any woman whatever who puts the same questions—who would dare to say *No* within arm's length.

[1] Annabella Milbanke.

June 8th, 1813.

DEAR L^Y^ M.,—On my arrival in town about half an hour ago (which I leave again to-morrow), I found your letter. I was determined not to plague you without.[1]

L^Y^ O[xford] has been in town, and we left it on Thursday for Salthill, where she now is, on her way to Portsmouth.

I expect to get away some time next month. C. has been quiet to a degree of *awful* calmness, which was fortunate, for God knows what I should have done, had she acted otherwise. She does not know that I am in town, but was equally decorous ever since the arrival of L^Y^ O[xford]; a very lucky accident. In that quarter we go on as usual. I do not know when she sails. I shall be with them till they embark; *he* is, I believe, with the ship, or in the sea. I saw him but once in town, and then it was to dispute about a stupid blunder on the subject of Kinsham, and other farming concerns.

L^Y^ O[xford] agrees with you perfectly that there must be no more interviews, but we have such a turbulent *minority* to deal with, that you must allow me to set off quietly, and even without weeping over you; for which I had prepared several pocket-handkerchiefs.

I shall now be but little in London, as I must see my sister, etc., and it is not impossible I may embark finally without taking leave of you; if so I leave everything about pictures and all such frivolities, to the entire disposal of C., whom I pray heartily I may not see before my departure—nor after. If you wish to say anything, you would have me do, or not do, a line before 3 to-morrow will reach me here.

I am in the most robust health, have been eating and drinking, and fatten upon ill fortune.

Ever yrs., my dear L^Y^ M^e^, B.

P.S.—I have just this moment had letters from the

[1] To and fro from Salthill, where Byron went to meet Lady Oxford.

Levant, where everything is going on in the old way, and well enough.

June 21st, 1813.

My dear L^{y} M.,—The Devil, who ought to be civil on such occasions, has at last persuaded L^{d} [Oxford] to be so too; for on *her* threatening to fill up my "carte blanche" in her own way, he quietly ate his own words and intentions, and now they are to "live happy ever after" and to sail in the pleasing hope of seeing or not seeing me again; so that the very letter in which I most committed myself to her, has by good fortune turned out the most successful of peremptory papers.

But on the other hand, your plague and mine has, according to her own account, been in "excellent fooling." Mr. L[amb], on his return, found her in tears, and was (no wonder) wroth to a degree, and wanted to know if I (the most inoffensive of men) had affronted her, &c. Now this is really laughable; if I *speak* to her *he* is insulted; if I *don't* speak to her, she is insulted. Now if he is to be equally offended at both, I shall not be long in choosing. I had much rather differ about *something* than *nothing*.

All this I only know from her, and probably it is not true. I, however, must say that it is not to be expected that I shall throw myself *in* or *out* of the way of either; let them amuse themselves in their own way. I may *shut* myself out of society for my own pleasure, but I will not be *put* out of it by any couple in Christendom.

With regard to the miseries of this "*correct* and *animated* waltzer," as the *M. Post* entitles her, I wish she would not call in the aid of so many compassionate countesses. There is L^{y} W[estmoreland] (with a tongue too) conceives me to be the greatest barbarian since the days of Bacchus and Ariadne; and all who hate L^{y} O[xford]—consisting of *one half* the world, and all who abominate me—that is, the *other half*,—will tear the last rag of my tattered reputation into shreds, threads, filaments, and atoms.

Where is my ticket? that I may personify L^d^ M[elbourne], a gentleman whom I should like to have represented for the last—let me see, how many years has he been your proprietor?

Why won't *you* go off with me? I am sure our elopement would have greater effect—cause a "greater sensation," as our orators say—than any event of the kind, since Eve ran away with the apple. Believe me,

Ever y^rs^ most truly, B.

June 29th, 1813.

Dear L^y^ M.,—I am just returned from L^d^ Eardley's,[1] where, seeing nobody, I came away without entering, which is quite as well, if C. and her mamma are there. I never look upon the latter without an idea of hartshorn. My lackey, I believe, announced me, which is awkward; but no matter, here I am safe and solitary.

L^y^ [Oxford] sailed yesterday, and now, my dear L^y^ M^e^, without pretending to *affect* or *effect*, will you not mention her name to me for the remainder of my weeks in England? To tell you the truth, I feel more *Carolinish* about her than I expected. They went at last so suddenly, the very day I was to have met her on the coast—all the fault of my sister's arrival. The last letter was written on board the diabolical ship.

I am doing all I can to be ready to go with your Russian. Depend upon it, I shall be either out of the country or nothing, very soon. All I like is now gone, and all I abhor (with some few exceptions) remains, viz. the R[egent], his government, and most of his subjects. What a fool I was to come back! I shall be wiser next time, unless there is a prospect of alteration in the whole system.

I shall see you somewhere soon, I trust; and in the meantime, if you could convince L^y^ B[essborough] that, whatever may happen, neither love of *her* nor *hers* will have anything to do with it, you will set the poor soul at ease.

Ever y^rs^, B.

[1] Baron Eardley of Spalding, *b.* 1748, created Baron 1789.

July 1st, 1813.

My dear L^y^ M.,—I will endeavour to be precise, as if I were to meet a more than friend or an enemy.

At last (at a pretty time, you will say) I declared to C. my real sentiments about L^y^ [Oxford], and I think they had a good effect. Do you know I am constancy in the abstract, and am much more faithful to people on the "high seas" than if they were on shore—I suppose from my natural love of contradiction and paradox.

To-morrow the Newstead cause comes on in Chancery[1]; but I shall not embarrass myself about such trifles, for I have got to stand for my picture, and to sit with my sister, and to drive to you, all which are matters more to my taste, and equally to my profit.

I missed you last night. Our party had all the refuse of the Regent and the Red Book—Bedfords, Jerseys, Ossulstones, Greys, and the like; but the sexes separated, the women were tied back to back upon half a dozen woolsacks in the middle of the room, hating each other and talking, and the men were sprinkled round the corners in dull duets. Rogers fell to my share, and we abused everybody. Your Frederick (by-the-bye, your introduction has done wonders, for we never speak) followed the degenerate example; everybody seemed to have lost an acquaintance. I never saw anything like it but a print from a scene in Dante's inferno, *which*, I leave you to guess.

I want a *she* voucher for a ticket to the A[lmacks] Masque to-morrow. It is for my sister, who I hope will go with me. I wish she were not married, for (now I have no home to keep) she would have been so good a housekeeper. Poor soul! she likes her husband. I think her thanking you for your abetment of her abominable marriage (*seven years* after the event!!) is the only instance of similar gratitude upon record. However, now she is married, I trust she will remain so.

Ever y^rs^, dear L^y^ M^e^, B.

[1] About Claughton's intended purchase.

July 6th, 1813.

Dear L^y^ M[elbourne],—Since I wrote y^e^ enclosed I have heard a strange story of C.'s scratching herself with glass, and I know not what besides; of all this I was ignorant till this evening. What I did, or said to provoke her I know not. I told her it was better to *waltz*; "because she danced well, and it would be imputed to *me*, if she did not"—but I see nothing in this to produce cutting and maiming; besides, before supper I saw her, and though she said, and did even then a foolish thing, I could not suppose her so frantic as to be in earnest. She took hold of my hand as I passed, and pressed it against some sharp instrument, and said, "I mean to use this." I answered, "Against me, I presume?" and passed on with L^y^ R[ancliffe], trembling lest L^d^ Y. or L^y^ R. should overhear her; though not believing it possible that this was more than one of her, not uncommon, *bravadoes*, for *real feeling* does not disclose its intentions, and always shuns display. I thought little more of this, and leaving the table in search of her would have appeared more particular than proper—though, of course, had I guessed her to be serious, or had I been conscious of offending I should have done everything to pacify or prevent her. I know not what to say, or do. I am quite unaware of what I did to displease; and useless regret is all I can feel on the subject. Can she be in her senses? Yet I would rather think myself to *blame—than that she were so silly* without cause.

I really remained at L^y^ H[eathcote's] till 5, totally ignorant of all that passed. Nor do I now know where this cursed scarification took place, nor when—I mean the room—and the hour.[1]

[1] Lady Caroline Lamb, writing to Medwin in 1824, thus describes the occurrence here referred to:

"He [Byron] had made me swear that I was never to waltz. Lady Heathcote said: 'Come, Lady Caroline, you must begin.' I bitterly answered, 'Oh, yes! I am in a merry humour.' I did so, but whispered to Lord Byron: 'I conclude that I may waltz *now*?' He answered sarcastically, 'With everybody in turn—you always

July 6th, 1813.

My dear Lady M.,—God knows what has happened, but at four in the morning L^y^ Ossulstone looking angry (and at that moment, ugly), delivered to me a confused kind of message from you of some scene—this is all I know, except that with laudable logic she drew the usual feminine deduction that I "must have behaved very ill."

If L^y^ C. is offended, it really must be anger at my *not* affronting her[1]—for one of the few things I said, was a request to know her will and pleasure, if there was anything I could say, do, or not do to give her the least gratification. She walked away without answering, and after leaving me in this not very dignified situation, and showing her independence to twenty people near, I only saw her dancing and in the doorway for a moment, where she said something so very violent that I was in distress lest L^d^ Y. or L^y^ Rancliffe overheard her. I went to supper, and saw and heard no more till L^y^ Ossulstone told me your words and her own opinion, and here I am in stupid innocence and ignorance of my offence or her proceedings. If I am to be haunted with hysterics wherever I go, and whatever I do, I think she is not the only person to be pitied. I should have returned to her after her *doorway whisper*, but I could not with any kind of politeness leave L^y^ Rancliffe to drown herself

did it better than anyone. I shall have a pleasure in seeing you.' I did so; you may judge with what feelings! After this—feeling ill—I went into a small inner room where supper was prepared. Lord Byron and Lady Rancliffe entered. Seeing me, Lord Byron said: 'I have been admiring your dexterity.' I clasped a knife, not intending anything. 'Do, my dear,' he said; 'but if you mean to act a Roman's part, mind which way you strike with your knife—be it at your own heart, not mine—you have struck here already.' 'Byron!' I said, and ran away with the knife. I did not stab myself. It is false. Lady Rancliffe and Lady Tankerville screamed and said I would do so. People pulled to get it from me. I was terrified. My hand got cut, and the blood came over my gown. I know not what happened after—but this is the very truth."

[1] Lady Melbourne wrote to Byron describing an interview with Lady Caroline and her terrible paroxysm of passion and violence. *In Whig Society*, 155.

in wine and water, or be suffocated in a jelly dish, without a spoon, or a hand to help her ; besides if there was, and I foresaw there would be something ridiculous, surely I was better absent than present.

This is really insanity, and everybody seems inoculated with the same distemper. L^y^ W[estmoreland] says, "You must have done something ; you know between people in your situation, a word or a look goes a great way," &c. &c. So it seems indeed—but I never knew that *neither* words nor looks—in short downright, innocent, vacant, undefinable *nothing*, had the same precious power of producing this perpetual worry.

I wait to hear from you, in case I have to answer you. I trust nothing has occurred to spoil your breakfast, for which the Regent has got a fine day.

July 9th, 1813.

My dear L^y^ Melbourne,—I do not know how she will make out any duplicity on my part towards you, for she is eternally asking if I am not in *love* with you, which at least shows that no *abuse* can have fallen from me on y^e^ subject. Who or what the persons may be who suppose me to blame, because a woman falls into a fury in public, I know not nor am anxious to know ; they may as well be quiet, for although I neither have, nor shall attempt to vindicate myself to any but you and her, from the truly absurd reasons she has adduced for her conduct, I have borne too much already to submit even to explanation.

I shall be under way in a few weeks, having nearly, indeed quite arranged my business, and in the meantime they shall not have far to hunt for me. Do you know that I look upon myself as the aggrieved person in this instance, as far as regards *her* and *her* own family (not yours, of course, for they cannot be blamed, do what they will), and with this conviction I defy them in any and every manner.

I do not understand her "sometimes cruel" and "sometimes kind," but her notions of kindness are not very well adapted for a public display. Was it

not in complying with the request of all her connections that I incurred this ebullition of selfish anger and distempered vanity ?

I have never from the moment the connection ended last year encouraged her in any of her absurdities—but if she absolutely of her own accord committed herself at any time, how could I betray or ill treat her ? You see what my *not* objecting to her waltzing (for I did and said nothing more) has produced. Let them begin at once instead of talking about it ; do they suppose there is anything so terrific in the Devonshire hive, *bees* or *drones* ? They shall find me a wasp. As to taking care of myself, that I must leave to Providence ; there is no guarding against her, I have done my best. To you I have now and ever to return my best thanks—if I am either angry or ungrateful it neither is nor shall be to yourself. Ever yours, most affectionately, BYRON.

July 18th, 1813.

MY DEAR L^Y^ M.,—The purchaser of Newstead is not a young man.[1] It was supposed that the purchase was for a Mr. Leigh, and I wish it were, for that gentleman could make fifty such, without injury to himself. Of Mr. Claughton's circumstances I know little or nothing. He bought the estate *not* at the public auction, but after a *fortnight's* deliberation after the public biddings—the price was entirely his own offer. He himself has never made such a representation to me, or my agents, and till this moment I never heard the report ; he declared and declares himself willing to complete when a title is made out, this we of course are prepared to provide. I do not, it is true, consider him a willing purchaser ; he evaded, and at last drove me into Chancery, but if he is ruined by this contract, or has been ill treated by me or mine on that subject, he has hitherto been silent, at least to me.

[1] Miss Milbanke had written to Lady Melbourne telling her she had heard a report in London that Lord Byron had behaved very unhandsomely to the "young man who purchased Newstead." *In Whig Society*, 159.

If anyone is injured in this transaction, in circumstances or unfair treatment, it is myself—the title to my estate (of 300 years' standing) has been doubted, my hopes and my arrangements overthrown and confused, and it should now seem, my character called in question. I have no time now to expatiate further on a subject which I feel persuaded will not require explanation to those who know me; besides, I am not very fond of defending myself. I shall, however, have an immediate explanation with the interesting *youth* (a *lawyer* of forty-five years) who is so much overreached by the dreadful chicane and wily experience of that mercenary and litigious person, who is Yours most truly, B.[1]

P.S.—You will make my best acknowledgments to Miss M. and say what is most proper. I have not the skill—you are an adept; you may defend me if it amuses you, not else. Let them say anything but what is true, and I forgive your prattlers against me.

July 30*th*, 1813.

My dear L^{y} M^{e},—There is Therlosky's farewell for you. She charges me with making my valet read her letters to me when in a *hurry* (as if that would not be the time for a man to read them himself) on the report of somebody whom I suspect by the brilliancy of the invention to be some of the she-Blarneys. Pray tell her it is false (now let me beg of you to do so, or she will never be quiet), and that I don't think the man *could*, if I wished him to, decypher her dispatches, but would resign rather than undertake unravelling her hieroglyphics.

"I don't tell you anything!" Very good, everybody rates me about my confidences with you. Augusta, for example, writes to-day, and the last thing she says is, "This must not go to L^{y} M^{e}," and, to punish you, it *shan't*. I commit you to the care of Providence, and am ever, my dear L^{y} M^{e}, Most affectionately, Y^{r} obliged S^{t}, B.

[1] See Byron's letter to Hanson, same date, *Letters*, ii. 232.

[BENNET STREET, ST. JAMES'S] *August 5th*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^Y M.,—My sister, who is going abroad with me, is now in town, where she returned with me from Newmarket. Under the existing circumstances of her lord's embarrassments, she could not well do otherwise, and she appears to have still less reluctance at leaving this country than even myself.

L^Y C. may do as she pleases. If Augusta likes to take her she may, but in that case she will travel by *herself*. Nugent does not know I am in town, and if he did, I could not at present accept his invitation, though your presence is a strong temptation, indeed much stronger for not being a new one.

So M^me de Staël says my visit was *justificatory*. This is not very justifiable in her; if she asserts that I said what I really did not, I shall revenge myself by repeating what she really did say. This she would not like, although our conversation was neither *amatory* nor *political*. I called because she said by not visiting I "treated her with contempt," an impression of which common politeness required the removal. I am always delighted to visit you at your own hour, but I am never myself in a morning, or rather I am myself, or Lord Stair (I doubt which very often) my dullness is so very ineffable.

We have an event in our family—a female cousin going to *Monros* for religion. Could not you send *one* of your family to join her?—she is to have a *spare* waistcoat that will fit the other I daresay; if not, I believe I must try it myself.

Ever y^rs d^r L^Y M., B.

August 8th, 1813.

MY DEAR L^Y M.,—I wrote y^e annexed note 3 days ago, and as it contains a "direct" answer to some of your queries I shall even let it go as it is. I put it in my drawer, and forgot it, for I have been occupied to weariness with various somethings and nothings ever since; amongst others in preventing two men (one

an old friend) from cutting one another's throats, after a quarrel in which I was called in to mediate and succeeded in reserving them for a different fate, and, I humbly hope, a better.[1]

I rather plume myself upon this, being the first decent deed I have done since my acquaintance with the most celebrated personage of your illustrious house, whose fault it is not, that I have not had the obligation returned.

I have not broken in upon your grief for the departure of your diplomatic progeny to cope with Buonaparte. I think L^y A^y might be an useful appendage to his suite, as by all accounts the Emperor is rather more frail than becomes a hero.

M^e de Staël's favourite son[2] has had his head cleft by a vile adjutant who knew the broadsword exercise better than piquet, for *that* was y^e cause of carnage. I thought *that* game had been only dangerous to your sex. Corinne is doubtless very much affected, yet methinks I should conjecture she will want some spectators to testify how graceful her grief will be, and to relate what fine things she can say on a subject where commonplace mourners would be silent.

Do I err in my judgment of the woman, think you? She is in many things a sort of C[aroline Lamb] in her senses, for *she is sane.*

Ever y^rs truly, B.

August 11th, 1813.

My dear L^y M.,—I ought to have called on you, and I ought all kinds of *oughts*, for omitting which I can only plead many excuses which will not amount to one apology. As this is the case, I shall omit them altogether, having already written, and

[1] Scrope Davies and Lord Foley.

[2] Albert de Staël met his death at Doberan, in the Duchy of Mecklenburg-Schwerin. He quarrelled with an officer at the gaming table, and a duel ensued. Albert's head was severed from his body by one of those long and formidable sabres which were carried by the Prussian cavalry.

destroyed, two ineffectual notes upon that and other subjects.

From C. after a long (for her) interval of silence, I have received a most rational letter, full of good resolves and a most tempting basket of full excellent fruit. The grapes and gooseberries I have returned, having no great appetite that way, but I keep the letter, which might do me more good, were it written by a grave character, and signed by the Abbess of Quedlinburg.

C. I assure you I have not seen, and I do really believe she has determined to leave me in quiet, God knows I want it. The few things I wished to have said to you did not at all concern her nor hers, nor you nor yours, daughters nor *nieces*. I should have been glad of your advice how to untie two or three "gordian knots" tied round me. I shall cut them without consulting anyone, though some are rather closely twisted round my *heart* (if you will allow me to *wear* one).

I suppose you will think I shall never go,[1] I almost think so myself, though every day renders it more necessary in all but a worldly point of view.

I don't know whether to be glad or sorry that I separated from the O[xford] party, though I have no great disposition to rejoin them.

Perhaps I shall not see you again; if not, forgive my follies, and like as much of me as you can. It is odd that I should begin by liking all of your house but *you*, and end by the reverse, with one exception. But you must recollect that I thought you my *enemy*, and my dislike was merely defensive.

Ever y^rs, B.

P.S.—I had a passage in y^e Boyne, but it was for *one* servant only and myself; this would not do, I am now casting throws for a storeship. I have, since I last saw you, found out about fifty better reasons than ever

[1] He had written to Croker a week or two earlier, and through him, Captain Carleton, of H.M.S. *Boyne*, had consented to give Byron a passage in his ship to the Mediterranean.

for migrating—" he says farewell and yet he goes not " —so say I, but I will go nevertheless.

August 18*th*, 1813.

My dear L^dy M^e,—I *am* "a very weak person," and can only answer your letter. I have already written and *torn* up *three* to you, and probably may finish in the same way with y^e present.

L^d S[ligo] is in town, and we are much embarrassed with y^e plague, which is, it seems, all over y^e Levant; but having been both at a prodigious expenditure in large trunks, small clothes, small arms for ourselves; snuff-boxes and telescopes for the Mussulman gentry; and gewgaws for such of the Pagan women as may be inclined to give us trinkets in exchange; why?—lest so much good preparation may be thrown away we are determined to go—God knows where—for he is bewildered and so am I. His Balarina has presented him with a babe, and malice says that he divides the honours of paternity with the editor of the *Courier*, who, I suppose, published his trial and tried his fortune with the lady much about the time that Sir Wm. Scott passed sentence of matrimony upon his mother. He is going to part with her, and is right; those opera-house connections are not very creditable. Besides, the eternal chaldron of boiling *suspicion* into which a man must be plunged if he likes one of these women must be insufferable, at least for a permanency.

Who is your *pencil* correspondent? *Her* query (for it looks like a female's) is too lively for Mrs. George,[1] has too few words for L^y Jersey, is not starch enough for your niece, nor patient enough for C. It is not L^y Blarney's, for it is legible; it is not ill-natured, so it can't be L^y Holland's. I have already named more people than I believe care where I am or what I am doing; or at any rate that would ask you the question. Tell me, and in return I will tell—no I won't.

Of C. I know nothing. I hear very seldom from her,

[1] Mrs. George Lamb.

and then she sends me sermons and fruit—that if one don't make me sick, the other may. I have a letter (not from her) to-day, in which there is an enquiry, "tell me when *did* you see L^y M." I will answer it when my correspondent can reply to me, "when I *shall* see L^y M."

I have scribbled on without saying a single thing I wished to say. This victory![1] Sad mark; nothing but conquest abroad and high health at home. Only think what a disappointment. The Wapping plague has turned out to be merely a vulgar, low, commonplace typhus fever, and won't kill one of our acquaintance unless they go to Gravesend to smuggle. Then the Congress[2]—L^d A. is to my conception as empty a piece of Caledonian coxcombry as ever wore a thistle, and as fit to negotiate as I to dance a Bolero—or C. to sit still, or L^y O. to *lie* still, or L^y Anybody to be still.

I don't know him, but merely judge from an air of pretension about him, which is generally the solemn cloak of shallowness. I have heard him speak badly, on Spanish affairs; very likely he may do better with our own.

Write to me soon, and believe me ever,

Y^rs most explicitly, B.

[LONDON] *August 20th*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^DY M.,—When I don't write to you, or see you for some time you may be very certain I am about no good—and *vice versâ*. I have sent you a long scrawl, and here be a second, which may convince you that I am not ashamed of myself, or else I should keep out of the way of one for whom I have so much regard. C. has been a perfect lake, a mirror of quiet, and I have answered her last two letters. I hope they will neither ruffle the lake, nor crack the mirror; but when she really and truly has been behaving

[1] Battles of the Pyrenees, July 31.

[2] The Congress of Prague met on Aug. 1, and on Aug. 12 Austria declared war against France. Lord Aberdeen was H.B.M. Ambassador at Vienna.

prettily, I could not write ferociously. Besides I happened just then to be in exquisite good humour with myself and two or three other people.

> "Perhaps Prosperity becalmed his breast,
> Perhaps the wind just shifted from the East."

Everything in this life depends upon the weather, and the state of one's digestion. I have been eating and drinking; which I always do when wretched; for then I grow fat and don't show it; and now that I am in very good plight and spirits I can't leave off the custom, though I have no further occasion for it, and shan't have till the next change of weather, I suppose, or some other atmospherical reason.

And now what are you doing? In this place we can only say what we are not doing. Town is empty, but not the worse for that; it is a delight of a place now there is no one in it. I am totally and unutterably possessed by the ineffable power of indolence. I see no one; I say nothing; I do nothing; and I wish for noth—— oh, yes! I wish to see you; and next to that to hear from you. I have great hopes of sailing soon, for Cadiz, I believe, first, and thence wherever the gods permit. I shan't be sorry to see that best and whitest of seaport towns again; but all this depends upon the weather, or my own caprices, which are much more whimsical.

How is your sole companion the Countess of Panshanger?[1] I have now been a retainer of your house one year and sundry months, and I know rather less of that illustrious lady than I did the first moment of my introduction; yet I have thought as much about her as any of you; not, the gods know, with any but the most profound reverence, but she puzzled me (which is very easy), and furnished me with many an entertaining soliloquy upon a variety of topics. Do you know I am an observer, but my observations upon man,

[1] The Countess Cowper was Amelia, daughter of Lady Melbourne. Lord Cowper died in 1837, and Lady Cowper married Lord Palmerston in 1839.

or rather womankind—like deep metaphysical researches—lead only to doubt, and then I leave them, or they me. Is not this a laudable spirit of enquiry into things that don't concern myself? Make my best respects, and don't be angry with me—which you will, however; first, for some things I have said, and then for others I have not said. You would not have me always talking *egotism*, though it is said to be allowable in a letter, and only in a letter.

I am now going to dine where I shall be obliged to drink more than is prudent, and I congratulate myself and you on having written this before dinner instead of after, though it is stupid enough to make you believe that I have anticipated my claret.

Yours ever, my dear L^y^ M., in *sober sadness*, or as a wine-bibber ought to say, in *sad sobriety*.

B.

[4, BENNET STREET] *August 21st*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^DY^ M^E^,—We are sadly bewildered. I ask you who was so good as to inquire after me, and you send me in reply some speculations upon a note in *pencil* you once saw, which came from a person you certainly never saw in your life, and who I am almost sure was never in London but once, and then only for two months. From, or of that personage I have not heard since last March. I do not know that anyone ever reproached me for ill-treating *C.* as far as regarded my acquaintance with you. Oh yes! there was one, but I know as little where she is as I do of the other; and we never were, nor—I dare swear—ever will be, in the least intimate. I have not said that any person objected at present to that magical influence I will not deny that you possess; not only over me, but anyone on whom you please to exert it. I never knew but three people who did object to it, and much good it did them!

I am "sick and serious," am I? Then you must cure the one, and laugh away the other; but I equally deny the malady, and the melancholy.

Of C.'s parcel and its contents I am in utter ignorance.

To the picture I plead guilty. I thought I had already said to you as I did to C. that it was for Augusta, who took it with her, I believe, into the country. She wants to go with me to Sicily, or elsewhere, and I wish it also; but the intelligence of the progress of the plague is really too serious; and she would take one of the children. Now L^y O[xford] sickened me of *everybody's* children; besides, it is so superfluous to carry such things with people—if they want them can't they get them on the spot?

After all I shall probably go alone. S[ligo] wants to go to Russia, only to see a *worse* London at St. Petersburgh. He prefers (as anyone in his senses would) the Mediterranean, but is staggered by the pestilence. He is not, I believe, the least jealous of his precious appendage, but *tired* of her; and I don't much wonder, poor fellow! Why should his "figure" prevent him from jealousy? I think it would be a very good cause, though he is less than the Prince, who I fancy did not find his *figure* in his way. Heaven knows what is to become of any, or at least most of our sex, if our masculine ugliness is to be an obstacle. It is fortunate that the caprice of your gender generally gets the better of their taste.

I am delighted to hear of your return to town; I shall then see you. You don't know how much good your conversation does me. You must promise me, if I stay away two years, to send me an invitation to Brocket on my return. I hope there will be no alarm; it is very hard to live in perpetual quarantine.

Ever, dear L^dy M^e, B.

P.S.—Scrope Davies and L^d Foley were the quarrellers you mention, and I was called in by the former.[1] A second's is a most inglorious and ungrateful office, and having as little desire to make others play the fool as to quarrel myself, with a little management I made it up between them, as might be done nine times out of ten, if the mediator is not a bully, or a butcher.

[1] See letter dated 8 Aug. 1813, and *Letters and Journals*, ii. 248.

You say my handwriting is altered. I fear not for the better. It depends upon my pens, and my humours —*both*, as you know, none of the best.

August 23rd, 1813.

My dear L^dy M.,—Would that Henry Luttrell had travelled, or that we could provide him with a mattress stuffed with peach-stones to teach him more philosophy in such petty calamities. I remember my friend Hobhouse used to say in Turkey that I had no notion of comfort, because I could sleep where none but a *brute* could, and certainly where *brutes did* ; for often have the *cows*, turned out of their apartment, *butted* at the door all night, extremely discomposed with their unaccountable ejectment. Thus we lived—one day in the palace of the Pacha, and the next perhaps in the most miserable hut of the mountains. I confess I preferred the former, but never quarrelled with the latter, and as to eating (by-the-bye I have lately stuffed like Count Staremberg) you know I am easily victualled.

A pretty panegyric you have passed upon the Countess,[1] "honourable and amiable." God knows I have no reason to doubt either, and never did—but methinks this is a marvellous insipid eulogium. "Amiable" she must be, because she reminds us very much of yourself, and "honourable," because she reminds me of nobody else. The fact is, you love her better than anything in existence; and for that reason you don't know how to praise her properly ; so you must confine yourself to abusing me, in which, if you don't succeed, it is no fault of mine.

You tell me I don't know women—did I ever pretend to be an unraveller of riddles ? and was there ever anyone more easily deceived and led by anyone, who will take the trouble than myself ? "Know them ?" not I, indeed, and I heartily hope I never may. "Was my good-humour from deceiving or being duped ?"

[1] Cowper.

The *last*, of course—or how could I be so happy as you seem to think me?

My head is a little disturbed to-day. I have to write—first, a soothing letter to C., a sentimental one to X. Y. Z., a sincere one to T. Moore, and one, a mixture of all three, to yourself, with as much of the ludicrous as you like to find in it. I ought to have said this in y^e^ beginning, for now I must end it. Adieu!

Ever y^rs^, B.

August 31st, 1813.

My dear L^y^ M^E^,—Your kind letter is *unanswerable*; no one but yourself would have taken the trouble; no one but me would have been in a situation to require it. I am still in town so that it has as yet had all the effect you wish.

I enclose you a letter from Sligo with *his Giaour*, which differs from our friend *C.'s* as much as from mine, for that reason I send it you. The part I have erased merely contained some barbarous Turkish names of no consequence, and some circumstances not immediately relevant to the story. When you have read it I will thank you for it again. I think it will make you laugh when you consider all the poetry and prose which has grown out of it.

Ever, my dear L^y^ M^e^, y^rs^, B.

P.S. Do you go to L^y^ Le D[espencer]'s to-night? I am asked.

September 5th, 1813.

Dear Lady Melbourne,—I return you the plan of A[nnabella]'s spouse elect,[1] of which I shall say nothing because I do not understand it; though I dare say it is exactly what it ought to be. Neither do

[1] During this time Byron was corresponding with Miss Milbanke. She wrote to her aunt apparently in fulfilment of a promise, describing her own views in regard to matrimony and her idea of what her husband should be like. See *In Whig Society*, 136–142. Some letters from him to her between August 25, 1813, and March 15, 1814, are printed in *Letters and Journals*, iii. 397–409.

I know why I am writing this note, as I mean to call on you, unless it be to try your "new patent pens" which delight me infinitely with their colours. I have pitched upon a yellow one to begin with.

Very likely you will be out, and I must return all the annexed epistles. I would rather have seen your answer. She seems to have been spoiled—not as children usually are—but systematically Clarissa Harlowed into an awkward kind of correctness, with a dependence upon her own infallibility which will or may lead her into some egregious blunder. I don't mean the usual error of young gentlewomen, but she will find exactly what she wants, and then discover that it is much more dignified than entertaining.

September 7th, 1813.

My dear L^{y} M^{E},—A letter from *A.*, from you, and from Ali Pacha by D^{r} Holland, just arrived, in which that amiable potentate styles me his "most excellent and dearest friend." What do you think was "dearest friend's" last exploit? Forty-two years ago the inhabitants of a hostile city seized his mother and two sisters, and treated them as Miss Cunégonde [1] was used by the Bulgarian cavalry. Well, this year he at last becomes master of the aforesaid city, selects all the persons living in the remotest degree akin to this outrage (in *Turkey* these are affronts), their children, grandchildren, cousins, &c., to the amount of 600, and has them put to death in his presence. I don't wonder at it, but the interval of 42 years is rather singular. This H[ollan]d [2] tells me occurred in the present spring.

[1] Cunégonde, the mistress of Candide, in Voltaire's novel *Candide*, chap. vii. "On ne vous a donc par violé? on ne vous a point fendu le ventre, comme le philosophe Pangloss me l'avait assuré?" "Si fait," dit la belle Cunégonde; "mais on ne meurt pas toujours de ces deux accidents."

[2] See *Letters*, i. 246, and note. Dr. (afterwards Sir Henry) Holland published in 1815 his *Travels in the Ionian Islands, Albania*, etc. He died in 1873.

He writes to me to get him a gun made, and assures me of his tender remembrance and profound respect.

I dine out, and am afraid I shall hardly be in time; but I will doubtless endeavour to have the pleasure of seeing you. I have a great many things to say, and some very good things to hear at any rate.

Ever y^rs, B.

[London] *September 8th*, 1813.

My dear L^y M^e,—I leave town to-morrow for a few days, come what may; and as I am sure you would get the better of my resolution, I shall not venture to encounter you. If nothing very particular occurs, you will allow me to write as usual; if there does, you will probably hear *of*, but not *from*, me (of course) again.

Adieu! Whatever I am, whatever, and wherever I may be, believe me most truly your obliged

and faithful B.

[Thursday] *September 9th*, 1813.

My dear L^y M^e,—I did not receive your note till midnight, having gone out immediately on writing my own, or you may feel assured that I could have as little resisted your *conjuration* as any other spell you may think proper to cast over me.

Something has occurred which prevents my leaving town till Saturday—perhaps till Sunday; later than that day I cannot well remain. Without, as A. says, being in a state of *despondency*, I am nevertheless very much perplexed; however, that must end one way or the other.[1] You say, "Write to me, at all events";

[1] On Aug. 22 he had written to Moore: "The fact is, I am at this moment in a far more serious and entirely new scrape than any of the last twelve months, and that is saying a good deal." On Nov. 8 he wrote to Augusta Leigh: "It is not Lady C. or O.; but perhaps you may *guess*, and if you do, do not tell." *Letters and Journals*, ii. 277.

depend upon it, I will, till the moment arrives (if it does arrive) when I feel that you ought not to acknowledge me as a correspondent—in that case, a sense of what is due to yourself, and a very grateful remembrance of all you have done to save one not worth preserving, will of course close our correspondence and acquaintance at once—the sincerest and only proof I could then afford of the value I set upon your friendship.

Ever yours, B.

ASTON HALL, ROTHERHAM, *September 21st*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^{Y} M^{E},—My stay at Cambridge was very short, but feeling feverish and restless in town I flew off, and here I am on a visit to my friend Webster, now married, and (according to y^{e} Duke of Buckingham's curse) "settled in y^{e} country." His bride, Lady Frances, is a pretty, pleasing woman, but in delicate health, and, I fear, going—if not gone—into a decline. Stanhope and his wife—pretty and pleasant too, but not at all consumptive—left us to-day, leaving only y^{e} family, another single gentleman, and your slave. The sister, L^{Y} Catherine, is here too, and looks very pale from a *cross* in her love for Lord Bury (L^{d} Alb[emarl]e's son); in short, we are a society of happy wives and unfortunate maidens. The place is very well, and quiet, and the children only scream in a low voice, so that I am not much disturbed, and shall stay a few days in tolerable repose.

W[ebster] don't want sense, nor good nature, but both are occasionally obscured by his suspicions, and absurdities of all descriptions; he is passionately fond of having his wife admired, and at the same time jealous to jaundice of everything and everybody. I have hit upon the medium of praising her to him perpetually behind her back, and never looking at her before his face; as for her, I believe she is disposed to be very faithful, and I don't think anyone now here is inclined to put her to the test. W[ebster] himself is, with all his jealousy and admiration, a little tired; he has been lately at Newstead, and wants to go again.

I suspected this sudden *penchant*, and soon discovered that a foolish nymph of the Abbey, about whom fortunately I care not, was the attraction. Now if I wanted to make mischief I could extract much good perplexity from a proper management of such events; but I am grown so good, or so indolent, that I shall not avail myself of so pleasant an opportunity of tormenting mine host, though he deserves it for poaching. I believe he has hitherto been unsuccessful, or rather it is too astonishing to be believed.

He proposed to me, with great gravity, to carry him over there, and I replied with equal candour, that *he* might set out when he pleased, but that I should remain here to take care of his household in the interim—a proposition which I thought very much to the purpose, but which did not seem at all to his satisfaction. By way of opiate he preached me a sermon on his wife's good qualities, concluding by an assertion that in all moral and mortal qualities, she was very like "Christ!!!" I think the Virgin Mary would have been a more appropriate typification; but it was the first comparison of the kind I ever heard, and made me laugh till he was angry, and then I got out of humour too, which pacified him, and shortened the panegyric.

L[d] Petersham is coming here in a day or two, who will certainly flirt furiously with L[y] F[rances], and I shall have some comic Iagoism with our little Othello. I should have no chance with his Desdemona myself, but a more lively and better dressed and formed personage might, in an innocent way, for I really believe the girl is a very good, well-disposed wife, and will do very well if she lives, and he himself don't tease her into some dislike of her lawful owner.

I passed through Hatfield the night of your *ball*. Suppose we had jostled at a turnpike!! At Bugden[1] I blundered on a Bishop; the Bishop put me in mind of y[e] Government—the Government of the Governed—and the governed of their *indifference* towards their governors, which you must have remarked as to all

[1] *sic*; query Buckden.

parties. These reflections expectorated as follows—you know I *never* send you my scribblings—and when you read these, you will wish I never may:

> "'Tis said *Indifference* marks the present time,
> Then hear the reason—though 'tis told in rhyme—
> A king who *can't*, a Prince of Wales who *don't*,
> Patriots who *sha'n't*, and Ministers who *won't*,
> What matters who are *in* or *out* of place,
> The *Mad*, the *Bad*, the *Useless*, or the *Base*?"

You may read the 2nd couplet *so*, if you like,

> "A King who *cannot*, and a Prince who don't,
> Patriots who would not, ministers who won't."

I am asked to stay for the Doncaster races, but I am not in plight, and am a miserable beau at the best of times; so I shall even return to town, or elsewhere; and in the meantime ever am

Yours, dear L^{y} M^{e}, B.

P.S.—If you write, address to *B[enne]t Street*; were I once gone, I should not wish my letters to travel *here* after me, for fear of *accidents*.

September 28th, 1813.

My dear Lady Melbourne,—I sent you a long letter from Aston last week, which I hope has been received at *Brocket*.

The Doncaster races (as I *foretold* you) drove me to town; but I have an invitation to go down again this week, upon which I am pondering. I had reasons of my own, some bad, and others good, for not accompanying the party to D[oncaste]r; my time was passed pleasantly enough, and as innocently at Aston as during the "week" of immaculate memory last autumn at Middleton.

If you received my letter, you will remember my sketch of the *Astonian* family; when I return I shall complete it; at present I doubt about the colours. I have been observing, and have made out one conclusion, which is that my friend W[ebster] will run his

head against a wall of his own building. There are a Count and Countess somebody (I forget the name of the exiles), the last of whom made a desperate attack on W. at L^d^ Waterpark's a few weeks ago, and W. in gratitude invited them to his house; there I suppose they now are (they had not arrived when I set out). To me it appears, from W.'s own narrative, that he will be detected, and bullied by the husband into some awkward compromise, and I told him as much; but like *others* of our acquaintance he is deaf as an adder. I have known him several years, and really wish him well, for which reason I overlooked his interference in some concerns of my own where he had no business, perhaps because also they had ceased to interest me (for we are all selfish, and I no more trust myself than others with a good motive), but be that as it may, I wish he would not indulge in such freaks, for which *he* can have no excuse, and the example will turn out none of the best for L^y^ F^y^. She seems pretty, and intelligent, as far as I observed, which was very little; I had and have other things to reflect upon.

Your opinion of y^e^ Giaour, or rather y^e^ additions,[1] honours me highly; you, who know how my thoughts were occupied when these last were written, will perhaps perceive in parts a coincidence in my own state of mind with that of my hero; if so, you will give me credit for feeling, though on the other hand I lose in your esteem.

I have tried, and hardly, too, to vanquish my demon; but to very little purpose, for a resource that seldom failed me before did in this instance. I mean *transferring* my regards to another, of which I had a fair and not *discouraging* opportunity at one time. I willingly would, but the feeling that it was an effort spoiled all again; and *here* I am—*what* I am you know already. As I have never been accustomed to parade my thoughts before you in a *larmoyante* strain, I shall not begin now.

[1] See *Poetry*, iii. 136 *et seq.* The following day he wrote to Murray: "Pray suspend the *proofs*, for I am bitten again and have quantities for other parts of *The Giaour*.

The epistles of your mathematician [1] (*A.* would now be ambiguous) continue; and the last concludes with a repetition of a desire that none but papa and mamma should know it; why *you* should not, seems to me quite ludicrous, and is now past praying for; but observe, here is the strictest of St. Ursula's 11,000 what do you call 'ems? a wit, a moralist, and religionist, enters into a clandestine correspondence with a personage generally presumed a great *roué*, and drags her aged parents into this secret treaty. It is, I believe, not usual for single ladies to risk such brilliant adventures; but this comes of infallibility; not that she ever says anything that might not be said by the town-crier, still it is imprudent, if I were rascal enough to take an unfair advantage. Alas! poor human nature, here is your niece writing, and doing a foolish thing, *I lecturing* Webster! and forgetting the tremendous "beam in my own eye"! No. I *do* feel, but cannot pluck it out.

These various absurdities and inconsistencies may amuse you; but there is a fate in such small as well as great concerns, or how came Moreau by his loss of legs? I saw an extract from his last letter to his wife (in MS. not published); he says that "*Coquin de Bonaparte est toujours heureux.*"

Good night.

Ever yours, B.

September 29th, 1813.

My dear L^y M^e,—I have written you a long letter—which I don't know whether to send you or not—since I came to town, which I leave again on Sunday.

C.'s communication to y^e Lady who *inherits your eyes* is quite a mistake—or what do I hear? In my way through Southwell (where I passed a year when eighteen), I might have been liable to what she calls "a new attachment," or, at any rate, an old one or two; but the letter I have written you will not please you,

[1] Miss Milbanke.

as I think you will perceive from its tone that I have *no newer* attachment.

I am asked again to Aston, and I think I shall go, because—you shan't have the real [reason], because (though it has nothing to do with W[ebster]'s family), but instead of *it*, because—they gave me a poodle dog, which I left there, and want to bring away with me.

L^{d} Blarney's *anomaly* delights me beyond everything. I think I can guess C.'s question; might it not be how far such a production was independent of "new attachments"? Depend upon it, she will never rest till she has obtained, in a philosophical way, all the information which can be seen or heard of such a phenomenon. How L^{y} B. must delight in my being in the secret; though I really don't see anything so astonishing in C.'s telling it to me, unless her ladyship—but no matter—and grandmamma, too. I suppose she will certainly found an hospital for the species, and appoint C. canoness thereof.

If I write much more I shall run into repetition of my last letter. Many thanks for all your own. I suppose the Sultan's communication was about the L.'s and G. L.'s embarrassments.

I don't think Ward is the reviewer of Fox, though he was certain to be suspected. Rogers will never recover *his*—he harps on it yet.

Heigh ho! I have been signing my will to-day, and must do the same for this letter.

Ever y^{rs} most affect^{ely}, B.

[London] *October 1st*, 1813.

My dear L^{y} M.,—You will have received two letters of mine, to atone for my late portentous silence, and this is intended as a further expiation.

I have just been dining at Holland House. The Queen is grown thin and gracious, both of which become her royalty. I met Curran there, who electrified me with his imagination, and delighted me with his humour.

He is a man of a million.[1] The Irish *when* good are perfect; the little I have seen of him has less *leaven* than any mortal compound I have lately looked into.

To-day I heard from my friend W[ebster] again; his *Countess* is, he says, "inexorable." What a lucky fellow—happy in his obstacles. In his case I should think them very pleasant; but I don't lay this down as a general proposition. All my prospect of amusement is clouded, for Petersham[2] has sent an excuse; and there will be no one to make him jealous of but the curate and the butler—and I have no thoughts of setting up for myself. I am not exactly cut out for the lady of the mansion; but I think a stray dandy would have a chance of preferment. She evidently expects to be attacked, and seems prepared for a brilliant defence; my character as a *roué* has gone before me, and my carelessand quiet behaviour astonished her so much that I believe she began to think herself ugly, or me blind —if not worse. They seemed surprised at my declining the races in particular; but for this I had good reasons; firstly: I wanted to go elsewhere; secondly: if I had gone, I must have paid some attention to some of them; which is troublesome, unless one has something in memory, or hope to induce it; and then mine host is so marvellous green-eyed that he might have included me in his calenture—which I don't deserve—and probably should not like it a bit better if I did.

I have also reasons for returning there on Sunday, with which they have nothing to do; but if C. takes a suspicious twist that way, let her—it will keep her in

[1] John Philpot Curran (1750–1817). Very few records of Curran's brilliant talk have been preserved. He was at this time Master of the Rolls in Ireland, but spent most of his time in England. See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 272.

[2] According to Gronow, Lord Petersham was one of the chief dandies of his day. He was a great Mæcenas among the tailors, and a particular kind of great-coat bore his name. He was tall and handsome, with a very winning smile. See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 269.

darkness; but I hope, however, she won't take a fit of scribbling, as she did to L^y^ Oxford last year—though Webster's face on the occasion would be quite a comet, and delight me infinitely more than O[xford]'s, which was comic enough.

Friday morn.—Yours arrived. I will answer on the next page.

So—L^dy^ H[olland] says I am *fattening*, and you say I talk "*nonsense.*" Well—I must fast and unfool again, if possible. But, as Curran told me last night that he had been assured upon oath by half the Court, that "the Prince was *not* at all *corpulent*, that he was stout certainly, but by no means protuberant, or obese," "there's comfort yet." As to folly, that's incurable.

"See C.! *if* I should see C.!" I hope not, though I am not sure a visit would be so disagreeable as it ought to be. "I pique myself on constancy, but it is but a sensitive plant, and thrives best by itself."

Then there is the story of L^y^ B.'s novelty, which I am sure she longs to unravel. How your passage on "the kneeling in the *middle* of the room," made me laugh this morning; it certainly was not the centre of gravity—pardon a wretched quibble which I don't often hazard. I did not kneel in the middle of the room; but the first time I saw her this year, she thought proper to fix herself there and turn away her head: and, as one does not kneel exactly for one's own convenience, my genuflexions would have been all lost upon her if she did not perceive them.

To return to the W[ebster]s. I am glad they amaze you; anything that confirms, or extends one's observations on life and character delights me, even when I don't know people—for this reason I would give the world to pass a month with Sheridan, or any lady or gentleman of the old school, and hear them talk every day, and all day of themselves, and acquaintance, and all they have heard and seen in their lives. [Webster] seems in no present peril. I believe the woman is mercenary; and I happen to know that he

can't at present bribe her.[1] . . . I told him that it would be known, and that he must expect reprisals—and what do you think was his answer? "I think any woman fair game, because I can *depend* upon L^y F.'s principles —she can't go wrong, and therefore I may." "Then, why are you jealous of her?" "Because—because—zounds! I am not jealous. Why the devil do you suppose I am?" I then enumerated some very gross symptoms which he had displayed, even before her face, and his servants, which he could not deny; but persisted in his determination to add to his "*bonnes fortunes*";—it is a strange being! When I came home in 1811, he was always saying, "B., do marry—it is the happiest," etc. The first thing he said on my arrival at A[ston] was, "B., whatever you do, *don't marry*"; which, considering he had an unmarried sister-in-law[2] in the house, was a very *un*necessary precaution.

Every now and then he has a fit of fondness, and kisses her hand before his guests; which she receives with the most lifeless indifference, which struck me more than if she had appeared pleased, or annoyed. Her brother told me last year that she married to get rid of her family (who are ill-tempered), and had not been *out* two months; so that, to use a fox-hunting phrase, she was "killed in covert."

You have enough of them, and me for y^e present.

Y^rs ever, B.

P.S. I do not wish to know y^e person's name, but to whom is the likeness—to *me* or to *her?*

ASTON HALL, ROTHERHAM, *October 5th*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^y M.,—W. has lost his Countess, his time and his temper (I would advise anyone who finds the *last* to return it immediately; it is of no use to

[1] Presumably The Countess, referred to in the next letter. Cf. *Letters and Journals*, ii. 269, 270.

[2] Lady Catherine Annesley, afterwards Lady John Somerset.

any but the owner). L^y F[rances] has lost Petersham, for the present at least; the other sister, as I have said before, has lost L^d Bury; and I have nobody to lose—*here*, at least—and am not very anxious to find one. Here be two friends of the family, besides your slave: a Mr. Westcombe—very handsome, but silly—and a Mr. Agar—frightful, but facetious. The whole party are out in carriages—a species of amusement from which I always *avert;* and, consequently, declined it to-day; it is very well with two, but not beyond a *duet.* I think, being bumped about between two or more of one's acquaintance intolerable. W[ebster] grows rather intolerable, too. He is out of humour with my *Italian* books (Dante and Alfieri, and some others as harmless as ever, wrote), and requests that *sa femme* may not see them, because, forsooth, it is a language which doth infinite damage!! and because I enquired after the Stanhopes, our mutual acquaintance, he *answers* me by another *question*, "Pray, do you enquire after *my* wife of others in the same way?" so that you see my Virtue is its own reward—for never, in word or deed, did I speculate upon his spouse; nor did I ever see much in her to encourage either hope, or much fulfilment of hope, supposing I had any. She is pretty, but not surpassing—too thin, and not very animated; but good-tempered—and a something interesting enough in her manner and figure; but I never should think of her, nor anyone else, if left to my own cogitations, as I have neither the patience nor presumption to advance till met half-way. The other two pay her ten times more attention, and, of course, are more attended to. I really believe he is bilious, and suspects something extraordinary from my nonchalance; at all events, he has hit upon the wrong person. I can't help laughing to you, but he will soon make me very serious with him, and then he will come to his senses again. The oddest thing is, that he wants me to stay with him some time; which I am not much inclined to do, unless the gentleman transfers his fretfulness to someone else. I have written to you so much lately,

you will be glad to be spared from any further account of the "Blunderhead family."

Ever y^rs, my dear L^y M^e, B.

October 8th, 1813.

MY DEAR L^y M.,—I have volumes, but neither time nor space. I have already trusted too deeply to hesitate now; besides, for certain reasons, you will not be sorry to hear that I am anything but what I was. Well then, to begin, and first, a word of mine host.—He has lately been talking *at*, rather than *to*, me before the party (with the exception of the women) in a tone, which as I never use it myself, I am not particularly disposed to tolerate in others. What *he* may do with impunity, it seems, but not suffer, till at last I told him that the whole of his argument involved the interesting contradiction that "he might love where he liked, but that no one else might like what he ever thought proper to love," a doctrine which, as the learned Partridge observed, contains a "non sequitur" from which I, for one, begged leave as a general proposition to dissent. This nearly produced a scene with me, as well as another guest, who seemed to admire my sophistry the most of the two; and as it was after dinner, and debating time, might have ended in more than *wineshed*, but that the devil, for some wise purpose of his own, thought proper to restore good humour, which has not as yet been further infringed.

In these last few days I have had a good deal of conversation with an amiable person, whom (as we deal in *letters* and initials only) we will denominate *Ph.*[1] Well, these things are dull in detail. Take it once, I have made love, and if I am to believe mere *words* (for there we have hitherto stopped), it is returned.

I must tell you the place of declaration, however,

[1] There is no doubt that the letters Ph. are made to stand for F(rances).

a billiard room.[1] I did not, as C. says: "kneel in the middle of the room," but, like Corporal Trim to the Nun, "I made a speech," which, as you might not listen to it with the same patience, I shall not transcribe. We were before on very amicable terms, and I remembered being asked an odd question, "how a woman who liked a man could inform him of it when he did not perceive it." I also observed that we went on with our game (of billiards) without *counting the hazards*; and supposed that, as mine certainly were not, the thoughts of the other party also were not exactly occupied by what was our ostensible pursuit. Not quite, though pretty well satisfied with my progress, I took a very imprudent step with pen and paper, in tender and tolerably turned *prose* periods (no poetry even when in earnest). Here were risks, certainly: first, how to convey, then how would it be received? It was received, however, and deposited not very far from the heart which I wished it to reach when, who should enter the room but the person who ought at that moment to have been in the Red Sea, if Satan had any civility. But *she* kept her countenance, and the paper; and I my composure as well as I could. It was a risk, and *all* had been lost by failure; but then recollect how much more I had to gain by the reception, if not declined, and how much one always hazards to obtain anything worth having. My billet prospered, it did more, it even (I am this moment interrupted by the *Marito*, and write this before him, he has brought me a political pamphlet in MS. to decypher and applaud, I shall content myself with the last; oh, he is gone again), my billet produced an *answer*, a very unequivocal one too, but a little too much about virtue, and indulgence of attachment in some sort of etherial process, in which the soul is principally concerned, which I don't very well understand, being a bad metaphysician; but one generally *ends* and *begins* with platonism, and, as my proselyte is only twenty, there is time enough to materialize.

[1] See *Don Juan*.

I hope nevertheless this spiritual system won't last long, and at any rate must make the experiment. I remember my last case was the reverse, as Major O'Flaherty recommends, "we fought first and explained afterwards."[1]

This is the present state of things: much mutual profession, a good deal of melancholy, which, I am sorry to say, was remarked by "the Moor," and as much love as could well be made, considering the time, place and circumstances.

I need not say that the folly and petulance of [Webster] has tended to all this. If a man is not contented with a pretty woman, and not only runs after any little country girl he meets with, but absolutely boasts of it; he must not be surprised if others admire that which he knows not how to value. Besides, he literally provoked, and goaded me into it, by something not unlike bullying, *indirect* to be sure, but tolerably obvious: "he *would* do this, and he would do that," "if any man," &c., &c., and *he* thought that every "woman" was *his* lawful prize, nevertheless. Oons! who is this strange monopolist? It is odd enough, but on other subjects he is like other people, on this he seems infatuated. If he had been rational, and not prated of his pursuits, I should have gone on very well, as I did at Middleton. Even now, I shan't quarrel with him if I can help it; but one or two of his speeches have blackened the blood about my heart, and curdled the milk of kindness. If put to the proof, I shall behave like other people, I presume.

I have heard from A.,[2] but her letter to me is *melancholy*, about her old friend Miss My's departure, &c., &c. I wonder who will have her at last; her letter to you is *gay* you say; that to me must have been written at the same time; the little demure nonjuror!

I wrote to C. the other day, for I was afraid she might

[1] Dennis O'Flaherty, called "Major O'Flaherty" in Richard Cumberland's *The West Indian*, acted in 1771.

[2] Annabella Milbanke.

repeat last year's epistle, and make it *circular* among my friends.

Good evening, I am now going to *billiards*.

Ever y^rs, B.

P.S. 6 o'clock. This business is growing serious, and I think *Platonism* in some peril. There has been very nearly a scene, almost an *hysteric*, and really without cause, for I was conducting myself with (to me) very irksome decorum. Her expressions astonish me, so young and cold as she appeared. But these professions must end as usual, and *would* I think *now*, had "l'occasion" been *not* wanting. Had anyone come in during the *tears*, and consequent consolation, all had been spoiled; we must be more cautious, or less *larmoyante*.

P.S. second, 10 o'clock. I write to you, just escaped from claret and vocification on G—d knows what paper. My landlord is a rare gentleman. He has just proposed to me a bet that *he*, for a certain sum, "wins any given *woman*, against any given *homme* including *all friends* present," which I declined with becoming deference to him, and the rest of the company. Is not this, at the moment, a perfect comedy? [1]

I forgot to mention that on his entrance yesterday during the letter scene, it reminded me so much of an awkward passage in "The Way to Keep Him" between Lovemore, Sir Bashful, and my Lady, that, embarrassing as it was, I could hardly help laughing. I hear his voice in the passage; he wants me to go to a ball at Sheffield, and is talking to me as I write. Good night. I am in the act of praising his pamphlet.

I don't half like your story of *Corinne*, some day I will tell you why, if I can, but at present, good night.

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, *October 10th*, 1813.

MY DEAR L^y M.,—I write to you from the melancholy mansion of my fathers, where I am dull as the

[1] At this very moment Byron was making arrangements to lend Webster £1,000. *Letters and Journals*, ii. 275.

longest deceased of my progenitors. I hate reflection on irrevocable things, and won't now turn sentimentalist.

[Webster] alone accompanied me here (I return to-morrow to [Aston]). He is now sitting opposite; and between us are red and white Cham[pagn]e, Burgundy, two sorts of Claret, and lighter vintages, the relics of my youthful cellar, which is yet in formidable number and famous order. But I leave the wine to him, and prefer conversing soberly with you.

Ah! if you knew what a quiet Mussulman life (except in wine) I led here for a few years. But no matter.

Yesterday I sent you a long letter, and must recur to the same subject which is uppermost in my thoughts. I am as much astonished, but I hope not so much mistaken, as Lord Ogleby [1] at the dénouement or rather commencement of the last week. It has changed my views, my wishes, my hopes, my everything, and will furnish you with additional proof of my weakness. Mine guest (late host) has just been congratulating himself on possessing a partner without *passion*. I don't know, and cannot yet speak with certainty, but I never yet saw more decisive preliminary symptoms.

As I am apt to take people at their word, on receiving my answer, that whatever the weakness of her heart might be, I should never derive further proof of it than the confession, instead of pressing the point, I told her that I was willing to be hers on her own terms, and should never attempt to infringe upon the conditions. I said this without pique, and believing her perfectly in earnest for the time; but in the midst of our mutual professions, or, to use her own expression, "more than mutual," she bursts into an agony of crying, and at such a time, and in such a place, as rendered such a scene particularly

[1] *The Clandestine Marriage.* Lord Ogleby, after being dressed for the occasion, made his bow to Fanny Sterling, and promised to make her a Countess. To his annoyance and profound astonishment, he was informed that she had been privately married to Lovewell for four months. Colman and Garrick, 1766.

perilous to both—her sister in the next room, and [her husband] not far off. Of course I said and did almost everything proper on the occasion, and fortunately we restored sunshine in time to prevent anyone from perceiving the cloud that had darkened our horizon.

She says she is convinced that my own declaration was produced solely because I perceived her previous *penchant*, which by-the-bye, as I think I said to you before, I neither perceived nor expected. I really did not suspect her of a predilection for anyone, and even now in public, with the exception of those little indirect, yet mutually understood—I don't know how and it is unnecessary to name, or describe them—her conduct is as coldly correct as her still, fair, Mrs. L[amb]-like aspect.

She, however, managed to give me a note and to receive another, and a ring before [Webster's] very face, and yet she is a thorough devotee, and takes prayers, morning and evening, besides being measured for a new Bible once a quarter.

The only alarming thing is that [Webster] complains of her aversion from being beneficial to population and posterity. If this is an invariable maxim, I shall lose my labour. Be this as it may, she owns to more than I ever heard from any woman within the time, and I shan't take [Webster's] word any more for her feelings than I did for that celestial comparison, which I once mentioned. I think her eye, her change of colour, and the trembling of her hand, and above all her devotion, tell a different tale.

Good night. We return to-morrow, and now I drink your health; you are my only correspondent, and I believe friend.

Ever yours, B.

[Aston, *Monday*] *October 11th*, 1813.

My dear L^dy M.,—C[aroline] is angry with me for having written by the *post* not a *very cold* letter, but below (it seems) her freezing point; pray say some-

thing—anything to prevent any of the old absurdities. Her letter arrived during my absence at N[ewstead] with a never sufficiently to be confounded seal, with C. at full length on the malignant wax; this must have been to answer the purpose it effected; at any rate, the person who opened the *bag* was the last I wished to see the *impression*, and it is not yet *effaced*, but it shall be—this is not to be endured. That my "chienne of a star," as Captain Raggado says, should have produced such an incident, and at such a time!

I have written to you so much, and so frequently, that you must be sick of the sight of my scrawls. I believe all the *stars* are no better than they should be. [Webster] is on the verge of a precious scrape, his quondam *tutor!* and ally, who has done him some not very reputable services since his marriage, writing, I believe his billets, and assisting him to those to whom they were addressed, being now discarded, threatens a development, etc. [Webster] consults me on the subject! Of this I shall take no advantage in another quarter, however convenient; if I gain my point it shall be as fairly as such things will admit. It is odd enough that his name has never hitherto been taken in vain by her or me. I have told him that if the discovery is inevitable, his best way is to anticipate it, and sue for an act of indemnity: if she likes him she will forgive, and if she don't like him, it don't matter whether she does or no.

From me she shall never hear of it.

It is three in the morning, and I cannot rest, but I must try. I have been at N[ewstead] and between that and this my mind is in a state of chaotic inaction; but you won't pity me, and I don't deserve it. Was there ever such a slave to impulse

As y^{rs} ever, B.?

Monday Afternoon [11 *Oct.*]

I am better to-day, but not much advanced. I began the week so well that I thought the conclusion

would have been more decisive. But the topography of this house is not the most favourable. I wonder how my father managed; but he had it not till L^y^ Carmarthen came with it too.[1] We shall be at Newstead again, the whole party for a week, in a few days, and there the genii of the place will be perhaps more propitious. *He* haunts me—here he is again, and here are a party of purple stockings come to dine. Oh, that accursed pamphlet! I have not read it; what shall I say to the author, now in the room? Thank the stars which I yesterday abused, he is diverted by the mirror opposite, and is now surveying with great complacency himself—he is gone!

Your letter has arrived, but it is evidently written before my last three have been delivered. Adieu, for the present. I must dress, and have got to *sheer* one of those precious curls on which you say I set so high a value; and I cannot, and *would* not, play the same pass you may laughingly remember on a similar occasion with C. My proselyte is so young a beginner that you won't wonder at these exchanges and mummeries. You are right, she is "very pretty," and not so inanimate as I imagined, and must at least be allowed an excellent taste!!

10 *o'clock.*

Nearly a scene (always *nearly*) at dinner. There is a Lady Sitwell, a wit and blue; and, what is more to the purpose, a dark, tall, fierce-looking, conversable personage. As it is usual to separate the women at table, I was under the necessity of placing myself between her and the sister, and was seated, and in the agonies of conjecture whether the dish before me required carving, when my little Platonist exclaimed, "L^d^ Byron, *this* is your place." I stared, and before I had time to reply, she repeated, looking like C. when *gentle* (for she is very unlike that fair creature when angry), "L^d^

[1] Byron's father at one time lived at Aston Hall, Rotherham, the house in which Byron then found himself as the guest of Wedderburn Webster.

Byron, change places with Catherine."[1] I did, and very willingly, though awkwardly; but "the Moor" (mine host) roared out, "B[yron], that is the most ungallant thing I ever beheld." Lady Catherine by way of mending matters, answered, "Did you not hear Frances ask him?" *He* has looked like the Board of *Green* Cloth ever since, and is now mustering wine and spirits for a lecture to her, and a squabble with me; he had better let it alone, for I am in a pestilent humour at this present writing, and shall certainly disparage his eternal "*pamphlet*."

Good even. I solicit your good wishes in all good deeds, and your occasional remembrance.

October 13th, 1813.

My dear L^y^ M.,—You must pardon the quantity of my letters, and much of the *quality* also, but I have really no other *confidential* correspondent on earth, and much to say which may call forth the advice which has so often been to me of essential service. Anything, you will allow, is better than the *last*; and I cannot exist without some object of attachment. You will laugh at my perpetual *changes*, but recollect, the circumstances which have broken off the last and don't exactly attribute their conclusion to caprice. I think you will at least admit, whatever C. may assert, that I did not use her ill, though I find *her own* story, even in this part of the world, to be the *genuine* narrative; as to L^y^ O., that I did to please you, and luckily, finding it pleasant to myself also, and very useful to C., it might have lasted longer, but for the voyage. I spare you the third.

I am so spoilt by intellectual *drams* that I begin to believe that *danger* and *difficulty* render these things more piquant to my taste. As far as the *former* goes, C. might have suited me very well, but though we may admire *drams*, nobody is particularly fond of

[1] Lady Catherine Annesley, a sister of Lady Frances, afterwards married Lord John Somerset, son of the Duke of Beaufort.

aqua fortis; at least, I should have liked it a *little diluted*, the liquid I believe which is now slowly mingling in my cup.

In the meantime, let us laugh while we can, for I see no reason why you should be tormented with sentimental or solid sorrows of your acquaintance.

I think you will allow that I have as little of that affectation as any person of similar pursuits.

I mentioned to you yesterday a laughable occurrence at dinner. This morning *he* burst forth with a homily upon the subject to the *two* and myself, instead of taking us separately (like the last of the *Horatii* with the *Curiatii*). You will easily suppose with such odds he had the worst of it, and the satisfaction of being laughed at into the bargain.

Serious as I am, I really cannot frequently keep my countenance: yesterday, *before my face*, they disputed about their apartments at N[ewstead], *she* insisting that her sister should share her room, and he very properly, but heinously out of place, maintaining, and proving to his own satisfaction, that none but husbands have any legal claim to divide their spouse's pillow. You may suppose, notwithstanding the ludicrous effect of the scene, I felt and looked a little uncomfortable; this she must have seen—for, of course, I said not a word—and turning round at the close of the dialogue, she whispered, "N'importe, this is all nothing," an ambiguous sentence which I am puzzled to translate; but, as it was meant to console me, I was very glad to hear it, though quite unintelligible.

As far as I can pretend to judge of her disposition and character—I will say, of course, I am partial—she is, you know, very handsome, and very gentle, though sometimes decisive; fearfully romantic, and singularly warm in her *affections*; but I should think of a *cold* temperament, yet I have my doubts on that point, too; accomplished (as all decently educated women are), and clever, though her style a little too *German*; no dashing nor desperate talker, but never —and I have watched in *mixed* conversation—saying

a silly thing (*duet dialogues* in course between young and Platonic people must be varied with a little chequered absurdity) ; good tempered (always excepting L^y^ O[xford], which was, outwardly, the *best* I ever beheld), and jealous as *myself*—the *ne plus ultra* of green-eyed monstrosity ; seldom abusing other people, but listening to it with great patience. These qualifications, with an unassuming and sweet voice, and very soft manner, constitute the *bust* (all I can yet pretend to model) of my present idol.

You, who know me and my weakness so well, will not be surprised when I say that I am totally absorbed in this passion—that I am even ready to take a *flight* if necessary, and as she says, " We cannot part," it is no impossible *dénouement*—though as yet *one* of us at least does not think of it. W. will probably want to cut my throat, which would not be a difficult task, for I trust I should not return the fire of a man I had injured, though I could not refuse him the pleasure of trying me as a target.[1] But I am not sure I shall not have more work in that way. There is a friend in the house who looks a little suspicious ; he can only conjecture, but if he *Iagonizes*, or finds, or makes mischief, let him look to it. To W[ebster] I am decidedly wrong, yet he almost provoked me into it—*he* loves other women ; at least he follows them ; *she* evidently did not love him, even before.

I came here with no plan, no intention of the kind as my former letters will prove to *you* (the only person to whom I care about proving it) and have not yet been here *ten* days—a week yesterday, on recollection : you cannot be more astonished than I am how, and why all this has happened.

All my correspondences, and every other business, are at a standstill ; I have not answered A., no, nor B., nor C., nor any *initial* except your own,[2] you will

[1] See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 323.

[2] In support of this statement we may here mention that no letters from Byron between 12 Oct. and 8 Nov. 1813 have as yet been discovered.

wish me to be less troublesome to *that one*, and I shall now begin to draw at longer dates upon y^r^ patience.

Ever yours, B.

P.S.—*always P.S.* I begged you to pacify C., who is pettish about what she calls a *cold* letter ; it was not so, but she evidently has been too long quiet ; she threatens me with growing very bad, and says that if so, " I am the sole cause." This I should regret, but she is in no danger ; no one in his senses will run the risk, till her late exploits are forgotten. Her last I shall not answer ; it was very silly in me to write at all ; but I did it with the best intention, like the Wiseacre in " The Rovers,"—" Let us by a song conceal our purposes," you remember in the " Anti-Jacobin." I have gone through a catechism about her, without abusing or betraying her ; this is not exactly the way to recommend myself ; I have generally found that the *successor* likes to hear both of the last *regnante*. But I really did not, notwithstanding the temptation.

October 14*th*, 1813.

But this is " le premier pas," my dear L^y^ M., at least I think so, and perhaps you will be of my opinion when you consider the *age*, the *country*, and the short time since such *pas* became probable ; I believe little but " l'occasion manque," and to that many things are tending. He [Webster] is a little *indiscreet* blusterer who neither knows what he would have, nor what he deserves. To-day at breakfast (I was too late for the scene) he attacked *both* the girls in such a manner, no one knew why, or wherefore, that one had left the room, and the other had half a mind to leave the house ; this too before servants, and the other guest ! On my appearance the storm blew over, but the narrative was detailed to me subsequently by one of the sufferers. You may be sure that I shall not " consider *self*," nor create a squabble while it can be avoided ; on the contrary I have been endeavouring to serve him essentially (except on the *one* point, and there I was goaded into

it by his own absurdities), and to extricate him from some difficulties of various descriptions. Of course all obligations are cancelled between two persons in our circumstances, but that I shall not dwell upon ; of the other I shall try to make an " affaire réglée " ; if that don't succeed we shall probably go off somewhere together ; but *she* only shall make me resign the hope. As for him he may convert his antlers into *powder-horns* and welcome, and such he has announced as his intention when " *any* man at *any* time, etc. etc.," " he would not give *him* a chance, but exterminate *him* without suffering defence." Do you know I was fool enough to lose my temper at this circuitous specimen of Bobadil jealousy, and tell him and the other (there are a brace, lion and jackal) that *I*, not their roundabout *he*, desired no better than to put these " epithets of war," with which their sentences were " horribly stuffed," to the proof. This was silly and suspicious, but my liver could bear it no longer.

My poor little *Helen* tells me that there never was such a *temper* and *talents*, that the marriage was *not* one of attachment, that—in short, *my* descriptions fade before hers, all foolish fellows are alike, but this has a patent for his cap and bells.

The scene between Sir B. and Lovemore I remember, but the one I alluded to was the letter of Lovemore to L^y^ Constant[1]—there is no comedy after all like real life. We have progressively improved into a less spiritual species of tenderness, but the seal is not yet fixed, though the wax is preparing for the impression. There *ought* to be an excellent *occasion* to-morrow ; but who can command circumstances ? The most we can do is to avail ourselves of them.

Publicly I have been cautious enough, and actually declined a dinner where they went, because I thought something *intelligible* might be seen or suspected. I regretted, but regret it less, for I hear one of the Fosters was there, and they be cousins and gossips of

[1] The *Way to keep Him*, by A. Murphy, 1760.

our good friends the D.'s. Good-night. Do *you fear* to write to me? Are *these* epistles, or your answers in any peril here? I must remember, however, the advice of a sage personage to me while abroad—take it in their English—"Remember, milor, that *delicaci* ensure every succès."

Yrs ever, B.

Newstead Abbey, *October* 17*th*, 1813.

My dear Lady M.,—The whole party are here—and now to my narrative. But first I must tell you that I am rather unwell, owing to a folly of last night. About midnight, after deep and drowsy potations, I took it into my head to empty my *skull cup*, which holds rather better than a bottle of claret, at *one draught*, and nearly died the death of Alexander—which I shall be content to do when I have achieved his conquests. I had just sense enough left to feel that I was not fit to join the ladies, and went to bed, where, my valet tells me, that I was first convulsed, and afterwards so motionless, that he thought, "Good night to Marmion." I don't know how I came to do so very silly a thing; but I believe my guests were boasting, and "company, villainous company, hath been the spoil of me." I detest drinking in general, and beg your pardon for this excess. I *can't* do so any more.

To my theme. You were right. I have been a little too sanguine as to the *conclusion*—but hear. One day, left entirely to ourselves, was nearly fatal—another such *victory*, and with Pyrrhus we were lost—it came to this. "I am entirely at your *mercy*. I own it. I give myself up to you. I am not *cold*—whatever I seem to others; but I know that I cannot bear the reflection hereafter. Do not imagine that these are mere words. I tell you the truth—now act as you will." Was I wrong? I spared her. There was a something so very peculiar in her manner—a kind of mild decision—no scene—not even a struggle; but still I know not what, that convinced me that she was serious. It was not the mere "*No*," which one has heard forty times before,

and always with the same accent; but the *tone*, and the aspect—yet I sacrificed much—the hour *two* in the morning—away—the Devil whispering that it was mere *verbiage*, etc. And yet I know not whether I can regret it—she seems so very thankful for my forbearance—a proof, at least, that she was not playing merely the usual decorous reluctance, which is sometimes so tiresome on these occasions.

You ask if I am prepared to go "all lengths." If you mean by "all lengths" anything including duel, or divorce? I answer, *Yes*. I love her. If I did not, and much too, I should have been more selfish on the occasion before mentioned. I have offered to go away with her, and her answer, whether sincere or not, is "that on *my account* she declines it." In the meantime we are all as wretched as possible; he scolding on *account* of *unaccountable* melancholy; the sister very suspicious, but rather amused—the friend very suspicious too (why I know not), not at all amused—il Marito something like Lord Chesterfield in De Grammont, putting on a martial physiognomy, prating with his worthy ally; swearing at servants, sermonizing both sisters; and buying sheep; but never quitting her side now; so that we are in despair. *I* am very feverish, restless, and silent, as indeed seems to be the tacit agreement of everyone else. In short I can foresee nothing—it may end in nothing; but here are half a dozen persons very much occupied, and two, if not three, in great perplexity; and, as far as I can judge, so we must continue.

She *don't* and *won't* live with him, and they have been so far separate for a long time; therefore I have nothing to answer for on that point. Poor thing—she is either the most *artful* or *artless* of her age (20) I ever encountered. She *owns* to so much, and perpetually says, "Rather than you should be angry," or "Rather than you should like anyone else, I will do whatever you please"; "I won't speak to this, that, or the other if you dislike it," and throws, or seems to throw, herself so entirely upon my discretion in every respect, that it

disarms me quite ; but I am really wretched with the perpetual conflict with myself. Her health is so very delicate ; she is so thin and pale, and seems to have lost her appetite so entirely, that I doubt her living much longer. This is also her own opinion. But these fancies are common to all who are not very happy ; if she were once my wife, or likely to be so, a warm climate should be the first resort, nevertheless, for her recovery.

The most perplexing—and yet I can't prevail upon myself to give it up—is the caressing system. In her it appears perfectly childish, and I do think innocent ; but it really puzzles all the Scipio about me to confine myself to the laudable portion of these endearments.

What a cursed situation I have thrust myself into ! Potiphar (it used to be O[xford]'s name) putting some stupid question to me the other day, I told him that I rather admired the *sister*, and what does he ? but tell her this ; and his *wife* too, who a little too hastily asked him " if he was mad ? " which put him to demonstration that a man ought not to be asked if he was mad, for relating that a friend thought his wife's sister a pretty woman. Upon this topic he held forth with great fervour for a customary period. I wish he had a quinsey.

Tell L[or]d H[ollan]d that Clarke is the name, and Craven Street (No. forgotten) the residence—may be heard of at Trin. Coll.—excellent man—able physician—shot a friend in a duel (about his sister) and I believe killed him professionally afterwards. L[d] H. may have him for self or friends. I don't know where I am going —my mind is a chaos. I always am setting all upon single stakes, and this is one. Your story of the Frenchman Matta, in " Grammont," and the Marquis.[1] Heigh ho ! Good night. Address to Aston.

Ever yrs., B.

P.S. My stay is quite uncertain—a moment may overturn everything ; but you shall hear—happen what may—nothing or something.

[1] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, vol i, chap. iv.

[NEWSTEAD] *October 19th*, 1813.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—In a day or two, probably before you receive this letter, I shall be in town, so that if you write, let it be to Bennet Street.

This may perhaps surprise you after my yesterday's epistle, but, nevertheless, nothing particular has occurred, at least sufficient to *alarm* you, or disturb me. Everything is nearly as it was, except our hopes and our spirits—many things interrupted—but nothing terminated.

Do you remember Matta's complaint of the court of Turin, where a man could not be in love with the wife without making love to the husband too[1]—or do you rather recollect Hamilton's expedition to L[d] Chesterfield's with the result? Mine is not exactly the same, for I have incurred no disgrace and encountered no peril, but I have thrown away the best opportunity that ever was wasted upon a spoiled child, and when it may occur again is not in my calculation.

You shall hear more when we meet; at present I shall only say, that Matta and the Marquis de Senantes will furnish you with a lively idea of me and my guest (late host).[2] I really can bear his humours no longer—no, not for—— With her I am ready and willing to fly to the "green earth's end"; but of that anon.

We are in despair, and he and I without coming to a downright quarrel, have yet subsided into a mortal coldness, for which he will be the first to be sorry.

I hope to see you.

Ever yrs., B.

NORTHAMPTON, *October 19th*, 1813.

MY DEAR LADY M.,—[Webster] and I are thus far on our way to town—he was seized with a sudden fit

[1] "Why," said Matta, "what a plaguy odd ceremony do you require of us in this country if we cannot pay our compliments to the wife without being in love with the husband?"—*Memoirs of Count Grammont*, vol. i, p. 43, edition A. H. Bullen, 1903.

[2] *Memoirs of Count Grammont*, vol. ii, chap. ix (*ibid.*).

of friendship, and would accompany me—or rather, finding that some business could not conveniently be done without me,[1] he thought proper to assume y^e^ appearance of it. He is not exactly the companion I wished to take ; it is really laughable when you think of the *other*—a kind of pig in a poke. Nothing but squabbles between *them* for the last three days, and at last he rose up with a solemn and mysterious air, and spake, " L^y^ Frances, you have at last rendered an explanation necessary between me and Ld. B[yron], which must take place." I stared, and knowing that it is the custom of country gentlemen (if Farquhar is correct) to apprize their moieties of such intentions, and being also a little out of humour and conscience, I thought a crisis must ensue, and answered very quietly that " he would find me in such a room at his leisure ready to hear, and reply. " Oh ! " says he, " I shall choose my own time." I wondered that he did not choose his *own* house, too, but walked away, and waited for him. All this mighty prelude led only to what he called an explanation for *my satisfaction*, that whatever appearances were, *he* and *she* were on the very best terms, that she loved him so much, and he her, it was impossible not to disagree upon *tender* points, and for fear a man who, &c., &c., should suppose that marriage was not the happiest of all possible estates, he had taken this resolution of never quarrelling without letting me know that he was the best husband, and most fortunate person in existence.

I told him he had fully convinced me, that it was utterly impossible people who liked each other could behave with more interesting suavity—and so on. Yesterday morning, on our going (I pass over the scene, which shook me, I assure you), " B.," quoth he, " I owe to you the most unhappy moments of my life." I begged him to tell me how, that I might either sympa-

[1] They were conjointly to sign a bond for the loan of £1,000 made by Byron to Webster. See letter to Hanson, 10 Oct. 1813. *Letters and Journals*, ii. 275.

thize, or put him out of his pain. "Don't you see how the poor girl *doats* on me" (he replied); "when I quit her but for a week, as you perceive, she is absolutely overwhelmed, and you stayed so long, and I necessarily for you, that she is in a worse state than I ever saw her in before, even before we married!"

Here we are—I could not return to A[ston] unless he had asked me—it is true he did, but in such a manner as I should not accept. What will be the end, I know not. I have left everything to *her*, and would have rendered all further *plots* superfluous by the most conclusive step; but she wavered, and escaped. Perhaps so have I—at least it is as well to think so—yet it is not over.

Whatever I may feel, you know me too well to think I shall plague my friends with long faces or elegies.

My dear Lady M., Yours, B.

October 21*st*, 1813.

My dear L^y^ M.,—You may well be surprised, but I had more reasons than one or two. Either [Webster] had taken it into his notable head, or wished to put it into mine, aye, and worse still, into y^e^ girls, also; that I was a pretendant to the *hand* of the sister[1] of "the Lady" whom I had nearly—but no matter—(to continue Archer's speech with the variation of one word) "'tis a cursed *fortnight's* piece of work, and there's an end." This brilliant notion, besides widening y^e^ breach between him and me, did not add to the harmony of the two females; at least my idol was not pleased with the prospect of any transfer of incense to another altar.

She was so unguarded, after telling me too fifty times to "take care of Catherine," "that she could conceal nothing, &c., &c.," as to give me a very unequivocal proof of her own imprudence, in a carriage—(dusk to be sure) before her face—and yet with all this, and much more, she was the most tenacious personage either from

[1] Lady Catherine Annesley.

fear, or weakness, or delicate health, or G—d knows what, that with the vigilance of no less than three Arguses in addition, it was utterly impossible, save once, to be decisive—and then—tears and tremors and prayers, which I am not yet old enough to find piquant in such cases, prevented me from making her wretched. I do detest anything which is not perfectly mutual, and any subsequent reproaches (as I know by one former long ago bitter experience) would heap coals of fire upon my head. Do you remember what Rousseau says to somebody, "If you would know that you are beloved, watch your lover when he leaves you"—to me the most pleasing moments have generally been, when there is nothing more to be required; in short, the subsequent repose without satiety—which Lewis never dreamed of in that poem of his, "Desire and Pleasure"—when you are secure of the past, yet without regret or disappointment; of this there was no prospect with her, she had so much more dread of the d—l, than gratitude for his kindness; and I am not yet sufficiently in his good graces to indulge my own passions at the certain misery of another. Perhaps after all, I was her dupe—if so—I am the dupe also of the few good feelings I could ever boast of, but here perhaps I am my own dupe too, in attributing to a good motive what may be quite otherwise.

[Webster] is a most extraordinary person; he has just left me, and a snuff-box with a flaming inscription, after squabbling with me for these last ten days! and I too, have been of some real service to *him*, which I merely mention to mark the inconsistency of human nature.[1]

I have brought off a variety of foolish trophies (foolish indeed without victory), such as epistles, and lockets, which look as if she were in earnest; but she would not go off *now*, nor render going off unnecessary. Am I not candid to own my want of success, when I might have assumed the airs of an "aimable Vainqueur"?

[1] Byron had lent Webster £1,000.

but that is so paltry and so common—without cause, too; and what I hear, and see every day, that I would not, even to gain the point I have missed. I assure you no one knows but you one particle of this business, and you always must know everything concerning me. It is hard if I may not have one friend. Believe me, none will ever be so valued, and none ever was so trusted, by

Yours ever, B.

October 23rd, 1813.

MY DEAR L^Y^ M.,—C. again! Will you pray tell her that I was only in town a day before she left it, and that if it were otherwise it must be long ago perfectly understood between her and me and everyone else, that it could have made no difference. I wrote to her a kind and a friendly letter, and regret that it has displeased her. I know no more, and can say no further, but do most humbly hope she will leave me to my own reflections; and as a further inducement, she may rest assured that they are by no means agreeable enough to render their disturbance a temptation. One of your A[ston] letters has arrived, and the other I doubt not will follow. I wish he *would* open a letter of mine, but he dare not. I am not sorry for this business, were it only on account of your epistles, which I do think the most amusing, the most *developing*, and tactiques in the world. Come what may, I can hardly regret the untoward events which led to an intimacy productive to me of much instruction, and not less *intellectual* pleasure; you have preserved me from *two*, one eventually and the other had been immediately fatal. I cannot repay the obligation, but I may at least acknowledge it; and as the world goes, it is something not to hate you for having done me so much service. If W[ebster] is playing a part, he cannot, I know, long keep it up. His *marrying* scheme, if premeditated, had been an excellent way of turning the tables; but it was done too abruptly and awkwardly to succeed—there

was no foundation for his edifice; and if there had, I would have blown it up about his ears. I prefer, if in the *regular* way, choosing my own moiety; though truth to tell, he recommended a woman of virtue; for I heard her say, "that she never was in a warm bath in her life," a certain sign that the care of your truly good woman is always confined to her soul. I don't know if you ever saw her,[1] she is very pretty, but petite, perhaps handsomer than the other, and I think more méchante; but in all other respects like all other young ladies of the market.

My Seaham correspondence has ceased on both sides,[2] and I shall not renew it. I am in great suspense: Marquis Tweeddale wants me to go with him to the army, like Corporal Trim, "to wink and hold out mine iron," I suppose. Madrid hath charms more than glory, or mere curiosity, and a fit of ill humour or vanity might or may lead me where "Honour comes unlooked for"; but, unless when *in* love or *out* of temper, my chivalry is not from the most Gothic, though a box on the ear from one sex, or a frown from the other might possibly call it into action. A more pleasing expedition would be to Middleton. I am asked next month, so are you; shall we go? we—at least *I*—shall have nothing to do, but probably something to observe and communicate. I send you (return it) the only notice *since* my departure: will you judge and *augur* from it for me? It puzzles me—you have more insight, and are besides impartial. I have just sense enough left to know that I cannot be so myself.

Your approbation of my Ethics on *the* subject gratifies me much. When we are happy we are too much occupied to be aware of its extent; it is only during the subsequent repose, the "abandon," that you can discover even to yourself, if you have *really* loved. If your thoughts recur to your own exclusive

[1] Lady Catherine Annesley.

[2] With Miss Milbanke. It was resumed on 10 Nov. See *Letters and Journals*, iii. 404.

situation, it is all over; but if still occupied by the other, I do not know whether the *memory*, and the *hope* are not worth all the rest.

It is difficult, and I have failed in expressing what I mean: no matter, let it go.

You will be in town on Wednesday—a great consolation to me. I am in the horrors of a hundred schemes, of which I shall say nothing, till they are accomplished or useless. Perhaps you will write on Monday.

Ever y^rs, B.

Monday.

I *had* finished my letter, but tore half of it. To-day's post has been hard in bringing me more than I have yet had time to read *twice*, and *your* last Aston letter *safe*; but your Brocket one is a little *savage*. You hint at my *presumption*; but, after all, the "vielle cour," when once people understand each other, is it not as well to come to the point? Yet you see (and I am glad you approved it), I *did* (and it is no trifle) sacrifice the selfish consideration to spare her self-reproach. I am going to be guilty of a breach of confidence in sending you the enclosed, though I cannot consider my *trust* in you as betraying her; if she is serious, so am I, and as willing as ever to go through with the business. The letter merely says what you already know; and all women (except L^y O. and Mrs. S[pencer] S[mith]) in that situation seem to have much the same style, except that my little *white* penitent appears rather more bewildered, and uses two words, "effusions," and "soul," rather oftener than befits out of the circulating library. You are not perhaps so just as usual in prophesying "*not* to the purpose"—everything a woman *writes* must be to the purpose; *no*, as much as *yes*. *Once* put a pen into their hands, and then tell me when they will lay it down again?

She mentions C., but not one word of *you*—a proof, at least, that she knows nothing of my extreme reliance and confidence in you. Perhaps you will think worse of me for sending this—if I were not in *earnest* I should

not; but I want your judgment about her. *I* can't be impartial, and I again repeat, *but* to *you*, her name is never breathed. You are with "the illustrious," [1] which makes me tremble. I know she thinks ill of me, and if you betray me she will think worse. I can possibly have no anxiety about *her* good opinion, further than as I am aware of her natural and unbounded influence over your own. I am wrong; but you really *wrong* me too, if you do not suppose that I would sacrifice everything for Ph—. I hate sentiment, and in consequence my epistolary levity makes you believe me as hollow and heartless as my letters are light. Indeed, it is not so; and I think my unbounded reliance on you (my natural enemy) may prove it. I don't fear you; no, notwithstanding *all*, and yet if I were reduced to the alternative of losing your friendship or any other person's love, our platonics would triumph.

Ever yours, B.

P.S.—Poor Robinson! it must be very ill-convenient to *you* this fracture.

In your Aston letter you say the Jackal must be in love too. I did not think so; but nevertheless gave W[ebster] a hint about those "Joseph Surface gentlemen," and asked him what he should have thought of *me* if, after our long acquaintance, I had suddenly commenced talking moralist.

W[ebster] at last almost went down on his knees to prevent an explanation between us, and used this odd expression—"If not for *my* sake, for that of L^{y} F[rances] do not quarrel. I never will forgive you, nor will *she*, if there is any scene on what passed at N[ewstead]." These were nearly his last words; but if he renews his tricks, or has views of his own, I will revenge, or perish in the attempt. "In love!" how came I not to think so before? but he has left A[ston]. If I am not even with him, never trust me,—a man, too, whom I did much to conciliate, and who dissembled to *me* with some success.

[1] Probably Lady Cowper.

November 4th, 1813.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I lose no time in assuring you that I not only am not, but never have been for an instant, in the least pettish about you. The other night at the play I was merely "buffooning," and I really thought you knew me well enough to perceive this. Angry, quotha! I am a pretty fellow to be angry with anybody, and least of all with you.

For the last three days I have been quite shut up; my mind has been from *late* and *later* events in such a state of fermentation, that as usual I have been obliged to empty it in rhyme, and am in the very heart of another Eastern tale [1]—something of the *Giaour* cast—but not so sombre, though rather more villainous. This is my usual resource; if it were not for some such occupation to dispel reflection during *inaction*, I verily believe I should very often go mad.

I have heard from *Ph.*[2]; she is very angry at me for *not* writing (after telling me it was impossible without *ruining her*), and supposes that I *must* have told *everybody* her adventures, and is particularly afraid that *I*—*I* by myself—*I* should confide it to W. W.!!! Was there ever such a fancy? tell a man that I wanted ——it is really laughable.

C. has been playing the devil about some engravings and fooleries. Will she never be quiet till she is in the round-house with her Sieur Henri, who it seems is a great villain, and her particular *protégé*—at least, so you said to me.

Good-night, my dear L[ady] M[elbourne]. Buonaparte has lost all his allies but *me* and the King of Wirtemburg. Do you remember Wolsey, "I and my king?" No matter, my alliance is quite as useful as that of Bavaria.

Ever yours, B.

November 22nd, 1813.

MY DEAR L[Y] M.,—C[aroline] has at last done a very good-natured thing; she sent me Holmes's

[1] *Bride of Abydos.* [2] Lady Frances Webster.

picture for a *friend leaving England*, to which friend it is now making the best of its way.

You do not go to M[iddleton] till 28th, and I shall procrastinate accordingly.

Yesterday the Lady Ossulstone sent for me to complain of you *all*. We had met at L^d^ Holland's the night before, and she asserted that the "extreme gravity of countenance" made her and L^d^ O. believe that I had some whim about that slip of the pen-*knife* of *C.'s* and the consequent rumours, &c., &c., and some resentment about her in particular; to all of which I pleaded ignorance and innocence. She says Lady Blarney is a very noxious person, and hates her, and that none of you have taken the least notice of her since; that she is the most *discreet* of women, to prove which she produced an epistle of L^y^ Somebody's, *wondering* (it was but *three* hours after) she had not *already* written a full and true account of it to her!! I thought I should have laughed in her pretty black face—and, in short, we are all very repulsive sort of persons, and have not behaved well to her, nor anybody else.

Remember all *this* (like all our *this*-es) is *entre nous*; and so there is an end of the matter. We had had a kind of squabble at the Argyle, which I could not help tormenting her a little by reminding her, not of *that*, but that evening, when we were all wrong-paired. *She* wanted to sit by Mildmay at supper, and I wanted to have been next that Kashmeer Butterfly of the "Blues"—Lady Charlemont—or in short, anybody but a person who had serious concerns to think of. Everybody else was coupled much in the same way; in short, Noah's ark *upset* had been but a type of the *pairing* of our supper-table. L^y^ Holland and I go on very well; her *unqualified* praises of you, proving their *sincerity!* She is the first woman I ever heard praise another *entirely*. L^y^ B[essborough] had better let us remain undisturbed, for if L^y^ H[olland] thinks that it annoys her there will be no end to y^e^ intimacy. I have taken the half-weeks (3 days in

each) of Lord Salisbury's box at Covent Garden, and there, when C. is in town, we can always talk for an hour on emergency.

The occasional oddity of Ph.'s letters has amused me much. The simplicity of her cunning, and her exquisite reasons. She vindicates her treachery to [Webster] thus: after condemning deceit in general, and hers in particular, she says: "but then remember it is to deceive '*un marito*,' and to prevent all the unpleasant consequences, &c., &c." ; and she says this in perfect persuasion that she has a full conception of the "fitness of things," and the "beauty of virtue," and "the social compact," as Philosopher Square has it. Again, she desires me to write to *him kindly*, for she believes he cares for nobody but *me!* Besides, she will then hear *of* when she can't hear *from* me. Is not all this a comedy? Next to L[d] Ossulstone's *voucher* for her discretion, it has enlivened my ethical studies on the human mind beyond 50 volumes. How admirably we accommodate our reasons to our wishes!

She concludes by denominating that respectable man *Argus*, a very irreverent appellation. If we can both hold out till spring, perhaps he may have occasion for his optics. After all "it is to deceive *un marito*." Does not this expression convey to you the strongest mixture of right and wrong? A really guilty person could not have used it, or rather they would, *but* in different words. I find she has not the *but*, and that makes much difference if you consider it. The experienced would have said it is "*only* deceiving *him*," thinking of themselves. She makes a *merit* of it on his account and mine.

The Dutch have taken Holland,[1] and got Bernadotte and Orange, the Stork and King Log at once, in their froggery.

Ever y[rs], B.

[1] In 1813 the Dutch joined the general revolt against Napoleon, declared the independence of Holland, and elected William, Prince of Orange, as a constitutional sovereign. Bernadotte, now King of Sweden, had also joined the allies against his old master.

I must quote to you correctly—"How easily mankind are deceived. *May he be always deceived!* and I, alas, am the base instrument of deception; but in this instance *concealment* is not a *crime*, for it preserves the peace of 'd'un marito': the contrary would," &c. I have been arguing on wrong premises; but no matter, the *marked* lines are quite as good.

November 25th, 1813.

My dear L^dy M^e,—Thanks by the thousand for your letter. I have lately been leading a whimsical life. Tuesday I dined with Ward,[1] and met Canning and all the wits; and yesterday I dined with the patrons of pugilism, and some of the *professors*, who amused me almost as much.

I wrote to C. a very earnest, but not *savage* letter. I believe the obnoxious sentence was, "If after this you refuse I hope you will forgive yourself, for I fear I cannot"; all the rest was merely entreaty. The picture is, however, God knows where; *they* have now, that is *four* (the Mussulman *legal* allotment) one picture a-piece, and as many originals of other people as they please in the interim. I had no idea C. would have restored it, but it was very kind, and I am very much obliged to her.

It is strange that Ph.'s greatest dread appears to be discovery, and yet she is perpetually as it were contriving everything to lead to it—she writes; makes me answer through an address to a third person whom she has *not trusted*; of course their curiosity will not be the least excited by being made an involuntary Post Office! Then she would not rest till she had this picture sent in the same way,[2] and the odds are, particularly with such a person as [Webster], that he has, or will in some manner stumble on something incontrovertible, and out of which she can't "*conceal*" herself (as she calls it), that is, in other words, invent an excuse. To say the truth I am not very unwilling

[1] Honourable John Ward, afterwards Lord Dudley.

[2] See Byron's *Journal*. *Letters and Journals*, ii. 350.

that this should be the case, as it will hasten a crisis of some kind or other.

His first impulse will be probably *martial*, but if I have a *motive* I don't mind that, it will at least leave her for the survivor, and the *survived* won't feel the want of her; besides, in my case it would be so *dramatic* a conclusion; all the sex would be enamoured of my memory, all the wits would have their jests, and the moralists their sermon. C. would go wild with *grief* that *it did not happen about her*. L^{y} O[xfor]d would say I deserved it for not coming to Cagliari—and—poor —— she would be really uncomfortable. Do you know I am much afraid that that perverse passion was my deepest after all. Well, suppose he should not take the angry road—at least with me, it then comes to a point between her and him: "Give him up, or part with me"; no one wants spirit, particularly the spirit of contradiction with that they dislike (she swore to me she never would give me up,—but that is nothing). Yet, I don't know that she would not take him at his word and send to me; but at all events the superiority this advantage would give him, and the additional distrust and ill agreement between them, must increase *soon*, so far that *our* union must be the event. The 3rd course is her getting the better, and his finding (as he has partly found) that my friendship is not inconvenient; and our all "living happy ever after." To one of these conclusions we must come, sooner or later, and why not now? We shall have forty other things to think of before spring—merely from the irritation of hope deferred—the most annoying of discordant feelings. "Have patience in the meantime," you say; so I will, if I can have nothing else.

The Duchess [of Devonshire]'s verses are beautiful, but I don't like *her* a bit the better.[1] I send you in

[1] Lady Elizabeth Hervey, born 1759, was daughter of 4th Earl of Bristol. In 1776 she married John Thomas Foster, who died four years later. In 1787 Gibbon proposed marriage to her, and was refused. In 1809 she married (as his second wife) the 5th Duke of Devonshire, who died in 1811. After that time she lived much

return *not* mine, as you will see by the hand; but I am not certain they are *hers* (Ph.'s),[1] though from the cast of thought it is very like her.

I hope I am not doing what Lord Grey did. He showed some letters of a woman as the most exquisite, &c., &c., till some sagacious persons pointed them out either in Rousseau's *Éloise*, or the *Portuguese letters*! I received these this morning, and think them pretty; pray tell me if they are, for, seriously, I am a very erring critic. One may write, and yet not be able to judge, and the reverse; return them on your return to town.

My new Turkish tale will be out directly; I shall, of course, send you a copy. Frere, and Canning, and the Hollands have seen, and like it; the *public* is another question, but it will for some *reasons interest you* more than anybody. These I leave you to discover (I mean totally independent of criticism, for you may not like it a bit the better), you know me better than most people, and are the only person who can trace, and I want to see whether you think my *writings* are *me* or not.

Yrs. ever, B.

When I speak of this *tale* and the *author*, I merely mean *feelings*; the characters, and the costume, and the tale itself (at least are very like it, I heard) are Mussulman. This no one but *you* can tell.

abroad and spent much time at Rome, where she interested herself in the excavations in the Forum and elsewhere. She was learned, and had a facile pen. Her verses were far above the average of those known as *vers de société*. The Duchess died in 1824.

[1] See *Letters*, ii. 346.

CHAPTER V

MARRIAGE

(1814–1815)

In 1813 Byron had reached and perhaps passed the zenith of his social and literary popularity in London. His liaison with Caroline Lamb had been broken off in 1812 by himself, and even his worst detractors can hardly deny him credit for this act. When she ran away from Melbourne House and her mother was searching for her all over London, it was Byron who succeeded in finding her and taking her home. Lady Bessborough wrote: "I am mortified to say it was more by his [Byron's] persuasions than by mine—and almost reproaches at her bearing to see me suffer so much, that she was induced to return with me to White Hall." [1]

In 1814 we find him in a state of nervous irritation at Lady Caroline's continued importunities, which causes him to write of her with bitterness and dislike.

Meanwhile, Byron was becoming more entangled in a social circle whose code of morality was lax, even judged by the standards of the Regency period.[2] He is restless and dissatisfied: he contemplates getting married, and settling down if he can find someone who will rule him, and lest he should fail in this he makes definite preparations for a return to the Levant and tries to persuade Hobhouse to accompany him.

[1] Correspondence of Lord G. Leveson-Gower, ii. 448.

[2] See *Edinburgh Review* for Oct. 1921.

The motives which led to his second proposal to Miss Milbanke were of a mixed character. There was evident dissatisfaction with his present mode of life and a desire to force himself into a more domestic groove: Lady Melbourne was anxious to see him married and settled, and his sincere regard for her led him to wish to be more closely attached to her family, and there was apparently some sense of pique at having for the first time been refused a request by any woman. He had, too, an undoubted regard and respect for Miss Milbanke which never amounted to a passionate affection. He admitted that he "didn't know what to make of her." [1] The courtship—or correspondence on the subject—began in the spring of 1814, and I have before me a packet of her letters written during the intervening months.

On 19 June Miss Milbanke writes: "Pray write to me—for I have been rendered uneasy by your long silence and you cannot wish to make me so." She then expresses a fear that she may have been too careless of forms and expressions, and so her meaning may have been misunderstood—or that it may have been faulty—but she hopes his kindness is undiminished, adding that she would expect correction from him, and that it would be received with grateful attention. Finally she begs him to keep their correspondence secret, as she had already been taxed with it. "I should acknowledge without a blush that I have *sought* your friendship and find in it an over-payment for the censure of superficial judges."

On 13 Aug. she writes again apologising for having extorted from him a profession of sentiments which he would have wished her to comprehend in silence. She believes that up to a certain stage

[1] Letter of 30 April 1814.

affections are under control, and hoped that his had been checked at that stage, as her own had been, by a comparative study of their respective characters which led her to believe that they were ill adapted to each other. She feared he was not the person whom she ought to select as her guide, support, and example on earth and with a view to Immortality.

In October she is anxious for his arrival at Seaham—and finds it odd that she should be called upon to pacify the old ones, so eager were they for his arrival: when other circumstances which delayed their wedding are removed she will make none—but will enter into the contract of obedience as willingly as he can desire; the other contracts she already performs.

They were engaged on 18 Sept., and Byron writes that he means to reform most thoroughly, and "to endeavour to make your niece happy." "As to Annabella," he writes to Lady Melbourne, "you cannot think higher of her than I do. . . . After all it is a match of *your* making—and better had it been had *your* proposal been accepted at the time." She is the only woman to whom I ever proposed in that way and it is something to have got into the affirmative at last."

On 2 Nov., after various delays, Byron arrived at Seaham for the first time: he likes Sir Ralph and dislikes Lady Milbanke. As for Annabella, "she perplexes me . . . she is the most silent woman I ever encountered." "I can't tell yet whether we are to be happy or not. I have every disposition to do her all possible justice—but I *fear she won't govern me.*"

These are ominous forebodings and misgivings. "However," he adds, "the die is cast." "This I must say for myself, that my attachment always increases in due proportion to the return it meets with."

Byron to Lady Melbourne

January 8th, 1841.

My dear L^y M^e,—I have had too much in my head to write; but don't think my silence capricious.

C. is quite out—in y^e first place *she* was not under the same roof, but first with my old friends the H[arrowby]'s in B[erkele]y Square, and afterwards at her friends the V[illiers]'s, nearer me. The separation and the express are utterly false, and without even a shadow of foundation; so you see her spies are ill paid, or badly informed. But if she had been in y^e same house, it is less singular than C.'s *coming* to it; the house was a very decent house, till that illustrious person thought proper to render it otherwise.

As to M^e de Staël,[1] I never go near her; her books are very delightful, but in society I see nothing but a plain woman forcing one to listen, and look at her, with her pen behind her ear, and her mouth full of ink—so much for her.

Now for a confidence—my old love of all loves—Mrs. ——[2] (whom somebody told you knew nothing about me) has written to me *twice*—no *love*, but she wants to see me; and though it will be a melancholy interview, I shall go; we have hardly met, and never been on any intimate terms since her marriage. *He* has been playing the Devil with all kinds of vulgar mistresses; and behaving ill enough, in every respect. I enclose you the *last*, which pray return immediately with your *opinion*, whether I *ought* to see her, or not—you see she is unhappy; she was a spoilt heiress; but has seen little or nothing of the world—very pretty, and once simple in character, and clever, but with no peculiar accomplishments, but endeared to me by a

[1] For his opinion of Mme de Staël see entry in his *Journal*, 6 Jan. 1814. *Letters and Journals*, ii. 379.

[2] Mrs. Chaworth Musters had written to him as follows on 24 Dec. 1813. "My dear Lord,—If you are coming into Notts, call at Edwalton near Nottingham, where you will find a *very old* and *sincere friend* most anxious to *see you*. Yours most truly, Mary."

thousand childish, and singular recollections—you know her estate joined mine; and we were as children very much together; but no matter; *this* was a love match, they are *separated*.

I have heard from Ph.[1] who seems embarrassed with constancy. Her *date* is the *Grampian* hills, to be sure. With that latitude, and her precious *époux*, it must be a shuddering kind of existence.

C. may do as she pleases, thanks to your good-nature, rather than my merits, or prudence; there is little to dread from her love, and I forgive her hatred. L^y^ H.'s second son is in Notts, and *she* has been guessing, and asking about Mrs. C.; no matter; so that I keep her from all other conjectures. I wrote to you in a tone which nothing but hurry can excuse. Don't think me impertinent, or peevish, but merely confused; *consider* one moment *all things*, and do not wonder. By-the-bye, I lately passed my time very *happily*.

By-the-bye, this letter will prove to you that we were at least friends, and that the mother-in-law erred when she told you that it was quite a *dream*. You will believe me another time. Adieu, ever y^rs^. Pray write and believe me Most affect^y^ y^rs^., B.

[LONDON] *January 10th*, 1814.

MY DEAR L^Y^ M^E^,—The "beloved friend"[2] was always a *she dogstar*, and had an ascendancy over her which I have felt to my cost; and, depend upon it, whatever point she has to carry will be carried. But

[1] Lady Frances.

[2] Mary Chaworth Musters wrote on Jan. 7: "You have rightly guessed, my dear Lord: the note dated Dec. 24 was indeed written by one of your earliest and still most faithful friends, but you must not make a journey on purpose into this ill-natured country. If, indeed, as I was led to believe, you had been coming to Newstead, I trust my request might have been granted without unpleasant consequences, as my present abode is with a near and dear relative [Miss Radford], and her cottage situated about two miles from Nottingham, on the London road through Melton, the way the Mail travels. To have seen once more the *friend* of my *youth* would, indeed, have been a great gratification. You will, I am convinced,

I hear (not from *either*), that they [1] are to be reconciled immediately; if so, I shall not journey 150 miles to be a witness of y^e^ re-union; and though I have no feelings beyond esteem, etc., now to spare, and she still fewer for me, in *that case* her wishing to see me was rather premature, because evidently she does not desire him to know anything of the matter. "Like C."! no more than I am like *Wm.*,[2] and as far her superior as I say, most sincerely (with "*an air*," you will say), and believe, Wm. is to me in every good and praiseworthy quality. As for C., don't talk of her, for I am really advancing fast to an utter detestation; which I try to curb, and which I must curb, for it is most ungenerous to allow it to get the better of me, because there are

feel assured my anxiety to see you arises from a *good* motive. The world would, I am aware, greatly condemn my having written, but I trust to your prudence and the esteem I will believe you still entertain for me, to act cautiously and destroy this scrawl with the others, as it is necessary our correspondence should now end. Before it concludes, let me as some exoneration for writing, which my conscience whispers me you will think improper, tell you that I have been very ill, and in my own opinion am still in a precarious state of health. Rumour must have informed you the sad changes too I have lately experienced, but I have the comfort of feeling that my own conduct has not deserved them and that to do what I thought right has always been my wish and intention. From this source I derive at least tranquillity, tho' my future destination is uncertain. It will be, I hope, to remain here some weeks longer, perhaps more. You would hardly recognize in me the happy creature you once knew me. I am grown so thin, pale, and gloomy. You have indeed seen much of the world, I very little. The small portion I have had an opportunity of observing disgusts me; so much better did I expect to believe people in general, judging from my own heart. But I am trespassing upon your time and patience. I have a beloved friend with me who begs also to be remembered in your prayers. Our united good wishes will attend you in every clime, but I hope you are not going to leave England again, and that you will sometimes visit Newstead. Why did you *frank my letter*? these are dangerous times, and I must be very circumspect. If you write again do not do so, and believe the assurance that I am the same faithful, sincere friend, Mary."

[1] Mary Chaworth and her husband.

[2] William Lamb, Lady Caroline's husband.

sacrifices which, once made, no provocation can quite cancel.

"My Confession" did not begin till I was *alone*, and has therefore nothing to do with the question of happiness; and as to "abandon," none but the greatest of sinners can have any idea of it; but *that* depends entirely on the persons themselves; however, there is no *comparison*, and there is an end of my theoretical observations.

I cannot conceive why the D—l should angle with so many baits for one whom, all the world will tell you, belonged to him probably before he was born. But when they give me a character for "Art," it is surely most mistaken; no one was ever more heedless. Moore, in a letter to me on a *different subject*, *you may suppose*, says, "the only chance of salvation for you—(I never look for any from yourself)—is the, &c. &c." Now, what he wishes me to avoid, *you* would call "my salvation." No matter; nothing can deprive one of the past; and as to the *future*, what promise did it ever keep to any human being? Besides, "there is a world beyond Rome," and, though you will not believe me, nothing but this confounded delay of Newstead, &c., could have prevented me from being long ago in my isles of the East. Why should I remain or care? I am not, never was, nor can be popular; and you will own I do not deserve nor indeed strive to be so. I never *won* the world; and what it has awarded me has always been owing from its caprice. My life here is frittered away; there I was always in action, or, at least, in motion; and, except during night, always on or in the sea, and on horseback. I am sadly sick of my present sluggishness, and I hate civilization.

Pray why the *Parenthesis*? Do you not know that *shyness* is really and truly y^e^ family appendage? it may look like modesty (but few see the likeness); it is very often contempt of others, and no great liking to oneself.

As to *loud* talking and shining, as it is called, I leave it to your wits; my only object in society is to see some

one person, to whom it is generally expedient to talk rather in a low voice; and if they listen and don't look uncomfortable (as *you* always do with me), it is all I hope; and when they are gone, I look about me, and see what proselytes my master is making, and interrupt nobody. Perhaps I shall go into Notts, but if they are together, I do not see how even friendship (on such a foundation as ours) would be much to the purpose.

Ever yours, B.

P.S.—Lady Mount[1] was seized with a sudden penchant for[2] and called on her at the Vil[rs] [Villiers] and asked her to some party, in gratitude, I presume, for the *Aston* summer, of which I suppose the *elder* informed her. I am sure she could not refrain from saying something of the Sr. Ph.,[3] as both she and I saw that she was vigilant to plague us. That business will never be renewed, or rather never completed. I *heard* from *Ph.* the other day as usual, but we shall not meet till spring. By that time it is impossible she should not be altered; and even if not, I shall not fool away my time on *theories*, and that stupid speculative reverie of Platonics, in which I was obliged to humour her fears, or her coquetry. She will fall eventually (probably soon) into some less indulgent instructor's precepts, for whom I have been merely paving the way; it was not my fault that this will be the case, but *she*—no, *I*—was the fool of her whimsical romance.

January 11th, 1814.

My dear Lady M[elbourne],—I have heard from (what new initial shall we fix upon?) M. again,[4] and

[1] Lady Mountnorris was the daughter of the Rt. Hon. Sir Henry Cavendish and Baroness Waterpark, and married in 1783, as his second wife, Arthur, Earl of Mountnorris and Viscount Valentia. She was the mother of Lady Frances Webster.

[2] Augusta Leigh.

[3] Sieur Ph. (i.e. Webster).

[4] Mary Chaworth.

am at a loss. You must advise me. I will tell you why. It is impossible I should now feel anything beyond friendship for her or anyone else in present circumstances; and the kind of feeling which has lately absorbed me has a mixture of the terrible, which renders all other, even passion (pour les autres) insipid to a degree; in short, one of its effects has been like the habit of Mithridates, who by using himself gradually to poison of the strongest kind, at last rendered all others ineffectual when he sought them as a remedy for all evils, and a release from existence.

In my answer to M. I touched very slightly on my past feelings towards her, and explained what they *now* were; hers I conceive to be much the same, as she says as much; but I am not quite so sure that seeing her again, and being on the terms of intimacy we once were, would not bring on the *old attack* on *me*, and the recollection of the former is not sufficiently agreeable to make me wish to risk another.

She is much governed by "dear friend" [Miss Radford], and "dear friend" and I, for certain reasons, am not very likely to agree on that subject, if on any other. I only wonder how she came to allow her to write to me at all. "Dear friend" is the elder by several years, was never handsome, but not unwilling to be thought so. I don't know how to manage her, even if I wish to preserve this same sickly friendship which is reviving between M. and me. I must try my hand at dissimulation; and shall probably over-act my part if I get interested in the business; in the meantime it must take its course. She talks of coming to town in spring; in that case I might have at least turned her friendship to some account, by playing it off against *Ph.*, which, from the disposition of the latter, would have ensured *her*; but I have quite resigned my pretensions in that quarter, and in every other.

I have just received the enclosed from C[aroline Lamb]; she seems to wish to alarm by some idea of my being hated by somebody I like; to whom, or what she alludes I do not know, nor much conjecture.

I shall not answer, and you will have the goodness to throw it, *C.'s*, into the fire.

You will read the other enclosure; favour me with your counsel, and return it. We shall perhaps not correspond much longer; but as long as I can I shall not cease occasionally to sign myself

Ever yours, B.

P.S.—If C. has taken *anything* into her head (which, by-the-bye, she *would* probably have done, at all events), it is all over; she will never rest till she has destroyed me in some way or other. When it comes to that point, and through her (yet I hardly know how, for I have neither written nor held any conversation of any kind with C. since our summer fracas), if it comes to that point, she will regret it. I have neither weapon nor defence against herself, but some of her instruments or connections (I mean *maternal* ones, with yours I can have nothing to do), will probably be invoked by her, and if but one, it will be good company in whatever journey I may wish to set out upon.

January 12th, 1814.

My dear Lady M[E],—More letters, one, two, three, from C., who wants pictures, forgiveness, praise for forbearance, promise of future confidence, and God knows what beside, with leave to show some elderly gentleman of wit and discretion the "Curse of Minerva." She may show him the "Curse of Caroline Lamb," or whatever she pleases! and may tell him the same long story she did to Sheridan the other day. I really believe her shortest and best way would be to print it, as her recitations are endless; and I really think she never will rest, till she or M[e] de Staël have it circulated through regenerated Germany, where she may enjoy the honours of suicide till a happy old age. But a truce with these fooleries. I *must not*, and *cannot* write; and as to pictures, I have no time to sit for a sign-post. Just as I had got her quite out of my head, and she was quietly disposed with you and everyone else, here

she comes again. It is too late, and never was a more unlucky moment, as it happens that the least additional drop will make my cup run over, and any irritation revenge her amply, but certainly at the same time separate her, and you, and me beyond y^e^ possibility of re-union for the remainder of our lives.

I don't think mine will be a long one (this you will think like her, but I don't allude to suicide; *that* is weak, and if I were inclined that way, it would never be from the pressure of pain, but satiety of pleasure), because from mere common causes and effects it cannot last. I began very early and very violently, and alternate extremes of excess and abstinence have utterly destroyed—oh, unsentimental word!—my stomach, and, as Lady Oxford used seriously to say, a broken heart means nothing but bad digestion. I am one day in high health, and the next on fire, or ice—in short, I shall turn hypochondriacal, or dropsical; whimsical I am already, but don't let me get tragical.

The last dangerous illness I had was a fever in the Morea in 1811, this very month; and what do you suppose was the effect? I really can't tell you, but it is perfectly true, that at the time when I myself thought, and everyone else thought I was dying, I had very nearly made my exit like some "Just man," whom a King of Poland envied. You will not believe this, but pray confine your scepticism to any *good* you may hear of me. I think you have seen that in my statements to you truth has been the basis. You do not know how uncomfortable the doubts (not yours) about M.[1] had made me; you have now perceived that we were "inmates of the same house," and I think you may also see that she was not ignorant that I was attached to her. I never said that it was returned; however, in a boyish and girlish way I might fancy it, heigh ho! Well, it does not much matter; but if I could begin life again there is much of it I would pass in the same manner.

[1] Mary Chaworth.

I leave town on Sunday or Monday next, and will write to you from Newstead; if you can pacify C. and keep her in good resolutions you will do her a service; as for me, I am not worth serving, nor preserving. By-the-bye, don't you pity poor Napoleon? [1] and are these your heroes? Commend me to the Romans, or Macbeth, or Richard III. This man's spirit seems broken; it is but a bastard devil at last, and a sad whining example to your future conquerors; it will work a moral revolution. He must *feel*, doubtless; if he did not, there would be little merit in insensibility. But why show it to the world? A thorough mind would either rise from the rebound, or at least go out "with harness on its back."

Ever yours, B.

January 13th, 1814.

My dear L^y M^E,—I do not see how you could well have said less, and that I am not angry may be proved by my saying a word more on y^e subject.

You are quite mistaken, however, as to *her*, and it must be from some misrepresentation of mine, that you throw the blame so completely on the side least deserving, and least able to bear it. I dare say I made the best of my own story, as one always does from natural selfishness without intending it, but it was not

[1] Byron may have referred to Napoleon's speech to the commissioners whom he had appointed a few days previously (first week of January) to arouse the provinces to supply money and men for the war, and to accelerate the action of the Government in every department. "I do not fear to acknowledge," said Napoleon, "that I have made war too long; I had conceived vast projects; I wished to secure to France the empire of the world. I was mistaken; these projects were not in proportion to the numerical force of our population. I ought to expiate the fault I have committed in reckoning too much on my good fortune, and I will expiate it. I will make peace. I will make it on such terms as circumstances command, and this peace shall be mortifying to myself alone. It is I who have deceived myself; it is I who ought to suffer, it is not France."

her fault, but my own *folly* (give it what name may suit it better) and her weakness, for the intentions of both were very different, and for some time adhered to, and when not, it was entirely my own—in short, I know no name for my conduct.

Pray do not speak so harshly of her to me—the cause of all. I wrote to you yesterday on other subjects, and particularly C. As to *manner*, mine is the same to anyone I know and like, and I am almost sure less marked to her than to *you*, besides any constraint, or reserve would appear much more extraordinary than the reverse, until something more than manner is ascertainable. Nevertheless, I heartily wish M^e^ de Staël at the devil with her observations. I am certain I did not see her, and she might as well have had something else to do with her eyes than to observe people at so respectful a distance.

So "*Ph.* is out of my thoughts"—in the first place, if she were out of them, she had probably not found a place in my words, and in the next, she has no *claim*. If people will stop at the first tense of the verb "aimer," they must not be surprised if one finishes the conjugation with somebody else—"How soon I get the better of—" in the name of St. Francis and his wife of snow, and Pygmalion and his statue—what was there here to get the better of? A few kisses, for which she was no worse, and I no better. Had the event been different, so would my subsequent resolutions, and feelings—for I am neither ungrateful, nor at all disposed to be disappointed; on the contrary, I do firmly believe that I have often begun to *love*, at the very time I have heard people say that some dispositions become indifferent. Besides, her fool of a husband, and my own recent good resolutions, and a mixture of different piques and mental stimulants, together with something not unlike encouragement on her part, led me into that foolish business, out of which the way is quite easy; and I really do not see that I have much to reproach myself with on her account. If you think differently pray say so.

As to Mrs. C.,[1] I will go; but I don't see any good that can result from it, certainly none to me—but I have no right to consider myself. When I say this, I merely allude to uncomfortable *feelings*, for there is neither chance, nor fear of anything else; for she is a very good girl, and I am too much dispirited to rise, even to admiration. I do verily believe *you* hope otherwise, as a means of improving me; but I am sunk in my own estimation, and care of course very little for that of others.

As to *Ph.* she will end as all women in her situation do. It is impossible she can care about a man who acted so weakly as I did, with regard to herself.

What a fool I am—I have been interrupted by a visitor who is just gone, and have been laughing this half hour at a thousand absurdities, as if I had nothing serious to think about.

Yrs ever, B.

P.S. Another epistle from M.[1] My answer must be under cover to "dear friend," who is doing or suffering a folly—what can *she*, *Miss R*[*adford*], be about?—the only thing that could make it look ill, is *mystery*. I wrote to her and *franked*, thinking there was no need of concealment; and indeed conceiving the affectation of it an impertinence—but she desires me not—and I obey. I suspect *Miss R*[*adford*] of wishing to make a scene between *him*[2] and *me*, out of dislike to both, but that shall not prevent me from going, a moment.

I shall leave town on Sunday. . . .

I don't think I laughed once, save in soliloquy, for ten days, which *you*, who know me, won't believe (everyone else thinks me the most gloomy of existences). We used to sit and look at one another, except in *duetto*, and then even our serious nonsense was not fluent; to be sure our gestures were rather more sensible. The most amusing part was the interchange of notes, for we sat up all night scribbling to each other, and came down like

[1] Mary Chaworth. [2] Mrs. Musters.

ghosts in the morning.[1] I shall never forget the quiet manner in which she would pass her epistles in a music-book, or any book, looking in [Webster's] face with great tranquillity the whole time, and taking mine in the same way. One she offered me as I was leading her to dinner at N[ewstead], all the servants before, and W[ebster] and sister close behind. To take it was impossible, and how she was to retain it, without *pockets*, was equally perplexing. I had the cover of a letter from Claughton in mine, and gave it to her, saying, "There is the frank for L^{y} Water^{d} you asked for;" she returned it with the note beneath, with "it is dated wrong, alter it to-morrow," and W[ebster] complaining that women did nothing but scribble—wondered how people could have the patience to frank and alter franks, and then happily digressed to the day of the month—fish sauce—good wine—and bad weather.

Your "matrimonial ladder" wants but one more descending step—"d—nation." I wonder how the carpenter omitted it—it concerned me much.

I wish I were married, and don't care about beauty, not *subsequent* virtue—nor much about fortune.

I have made up my mind to share the decorations of my betters—but I should like—let me see—liveliness, gentleness, cleanliness, and something of comeliness—and *my own* first born. Was ever man more moderate? what do you think of my "Bachelor's wife?" What a letter have I written!

January 15th, 1814.

MY DEAR L^{Y} M^{E},—As I shall not leave town till Monday, I have time to hear once by return of post, if convenient to yourself. That you may judge exactly how *Ph.* and I are at present with regard to each other, I send you her last epistle; the first part is girlish and romantic, and the whole not much to the

[1] While at Aston.

purpose—as to the "telling," I believe no one but yourself has any foundation but their own suspicions, and after all there is nothing to be told.

I had an odd dialogue lately with Ph.'s sister. We were talking of passing time in the country, and I said that my usual and favourite method was to pass several hours of the day *quietly* and *alone*. "*Alone*, but not *quietly*," she answered. "What do you mean?" "What I have said, I have seen you, when you did not *see me*." I asked, as you may be sure, for an explanation, which she gave me as follows: "The morning before we all left N[ewstead], I had been walking with *Ph.* in the cloisters, where I left her to go to my room. When I got to the hall door, which was half open, I stopped, as I am short-sighted, to look through my glass at a person leaning alone near the fire, and whom I could not at first distinguish—it was *you*, but I really did not know you immediately, you were perfectly *convulsed*." "Why did not you walk on, and speak to me?" "Because I was frightened, and did not not know what to do; but I turned back to *Ph.*" "Did you mention this to her?" "No, I had reasons for keeping it to myself."

I perfectly recollect being where she describes; and some of my sensations, but I was not aware of betraying them to anyone. The hall at N[ewstead] is in the *Abbey* part of that enormous mansion; and quite remote from any but my own rooms; and this was the last day but one we passed together. You may perhaps judge from this that I *do feel* sometimes; and that for her at that time I *did* feel enough.

You will think this *scene* a little in C.'s style; but recollect, first, it is not *my* description; and secondly, it was not before five hundred people, nor was I aware that anyone had seen it at all; and that I laid no great stress on it you may suppose, by my never having told it even to you before.

So you have H.R.H.[1] on Tuesday. Well, I envy

[1] The Regent.

him his visit, and many years of his life; much more than I do his *Regency*.

It is cruel to mention Middleton, when I daily regret not going—how does C. go on? I do think between her *theory*, and my system of ethics, you will begin to think that our first parents had better have paused before they plucked the tree of knowledge.

Ever y^rs most truly, B.

January 16th, 1814.

MY DEAR LADY M[ELBOURN]E,—Lewis[1] is just returned from Oatlands, where he has been quarrelling with Stael about everything and everybody. She has not even let poor quiet *me* alone, but has discovered, first, that I am affected; and 2^ndly, that I "*shut* my *eyes* during dinner!" What this last can mean I don't know, unless *she* is opposite. If I then do, she is very much obliged to me; and if at the same time I could contrive to shut my ears, she would be still more so. . . . If I really have so ludicrous a habit, will *you* tell me so—and I will try and break myself of it. In the meantime, I think the charge will amuse you. I have worse faults to find with *her* than "*shutting* her eyes"—one of which is opening her mouth too frequently.

Do not you think people are very naughty? What do you think I have this very day heard said of poor M.[2]? It provoked me beyond anything, as *he* was named as authority—why the abominable stories they circulate about Lady *W.*, of which I can say no more. All this is owing to "dear friend"; and yet, as far as it regards "dear friend," I must say I have very sufficing suspicions for believing them utterly false; at least, she must have altered strangely within this nine years—but this is the age of revolutions.

Her ascendancy always appeared to me that of a cunning mind over a weak one. But—but—why the woman is a fright, which, after all, is the best reason for not believing it.

[1] Matthew Gregory Lewis, commonly known as "Monk" Lewis, See *Letters and Journals*, ii. 379.

[2] Mrs. Musters.

I still mean to set off to-morrow, unless this snow adds so much to the impracticability of the roads as to render it useless. I don't mind anything but delay; and I might as well be in London as at a sordid inn, waiting for a thaw, or the subsiding of a flood and the clearing of snow.

I wonder what *your* answer will be on *Ph.'s letter*. I am growing rather partial to her younger sister[1]; who is very pretty, but fearfully young—and I think a *fool*. A wife, you say, would be my salvation. Now I could have but one motive for marrying into that family—and even *that* might possibly only produce a scene, and spoil everything; but at all events it would in some degree be a *revenge*, and in the very face of your compliment (*ironical*, I believe) on the want of *selfishness*, I must say that I never can quite get over the "*not*" of last summer—no—though it were to become "yea" to-morrow.

I do believe that to marry would be my wisest step—but whom? I might manage this easily with "*le père*," but I don't admire the connection—and I have not committed myself by any attentions hitherto. But all wives would be much the same. I have no heart to spare and expect none in return; but, as Moore says, "A pretty wife is something for the fastidious vanity of a *roué* to *retire* upon." And mine might do as she pleased, so that she had a fair temper, and a quiet way of conducting herself, leaving me the same liberty of conscience.

What I want is a companion—a friend rather than a sentimentalist. I have seen enough of love matches—and of all matches—to make up my mind to the common lot of happy couples. The only misery would be if I fell in love afterwards—which is not unlikely, for habit has a strange power over my affections. In that case I should be jealous, and then you do not know what a devil any bad passion makes me. I should very

[1] Lady C. Annesley. See *Journal* of 16 Jan. 1814. *Letters and Journals*, ii. 380.

likely *do* all that *C. threatens* in her paroxysms; and I have more reasons than you are aware of, for mistrusting myself on this point.

Heigh-ho! Good night.

Ever y^rs most truly, B.

P.S.—The enclosed was written last night, and I am just setting off. You shall hear from Newstead—if one ever gets there in a coach really as large as the cabin of a "74," and, I believe, meant for the Atlantic instead of the Continent.

1,000 thanks for yours of this morn; "never loved so before." Well, then, I hope never to be loved *so* again—for what is it to the *purpose*? You wonder how I answered it?[1] To tell you the *truth* (which I could not tell *her*), I have not answered it at all—nor shall. I feel so much inclined to believe her sincere, that I cannot sit down and coolly repay her truth with fifty falsehoods. I do not believe her for the same *reason* you *believe*, not because by writing she commits herself—and that is seldom done unless in earnest.

I shall be delighted to hear your *defence* against my insinuations, but you will make nothing of it—and he *is* very much to be envied. But you mistake me, for I do not mean in *general*; on the contrary, I coincide with him in taste but upon *one* instance.

C. was right about the poem. I have scribbled a longer one than either of the last, and it is in the press,[2] but you know I never hold forth to you on such topics—why should I? Now you will think this a piece of conceit, but, really, it is a relief to the fever of my mind to *write*; and as at present I am what they call "popular" as an author—it enables me to serve one or two people without embarrassing anything but my brains—for I never have, nor shall avail myself of the *lucre*. And yet it would be folly merely to make presents to a bookseller, whose accounts *to* me last year are just 1,500 guineas, *without* including C[hild]e

[1] This refers to Lady Frances Webster.

[2] *The Corsair*, published January 1814.

H[arold]. Now the odd part is, that if I were a regular stipendiary, and wanted it, probably I should not be offered *one half*. But such are mankind—always offering or denying in the wrong place. But I have written more than enough already; and this is my last experiment on public patience—and just at present I won't try *yours* any further.

Ever, my dear L^{dy} M^{e}, &c., B.

[NEWSTEAD] *January 29th*, 1814.

MY DEAR L^{Y} M^{E},—I wrote a long letter to you yesterday, and in case it should not reach you, I may as well do the like to-day. Never was such weather. One would imagine Heaven wanted to raise a powder-tax, and had sent the snow to lay it on. However, being in no want of combustibles (you know that Notts is famous for coals and the fair sex), and my books and cellar being both in tolerable order, I can laugh, even though looking through a window; though I almost suspect myself of the rheumatism in one of my joints and a chilblain besides—two very unsentimental maladies.

My yesterday's was an epistle almost of business—and what this will be I cannot tell. No matter—if you don't quarrel with it or the writer.

I have at last heard (the weather won't let me see her) M[ary Chaworth]'s intentions. She says (*since* yesterday) she believes *return impossible*, and that she will "soon act for herself"; and then talks of being in town in spring. What she proposes to herself in coming there, or why she cannot kiss and be friends with *him*, I do not know, and shall not enquire; but she appears to me to be acting injudiciously in both instances.

As a woman of an old family and large fortune (of which from the circumstances she may probably retain a considerable income), and of unimpeached character, it will not perhaps be difficult for her to enter good society. But she is shy, and singular, and will be

terribly out of her element. But though pretty (at least, she was so), I should not think her liable to get into any scrape, but a great deal of discomfort. In one of her epistles she tells me that I have always been represented as "totally without principle with regard to her sex"—against which charge she invariably thought it right to defend me. In *my* opinion very justly, doubtless; but I think it very imprudent in her to select, at this time, a man of that supposed description, for her "to consider as a friend or a beloved *brother*" (I believe I quote correctly); and the more so, because I am quite convinced she herself has no idea of ever regarding me as anything more—and would be exceedingly surprised and vexed if she found the world saying otherwise. The next absurd thing is making a mystery of our correspondence—which she does in every possible way—and at y^e^ same time writing almost every day;—in short—thus her proceedings stand at present. I have *hinted*, as delicately as I could, pretty nearly what you have read in this letter. I told her not to "consider me for a moment, but to act entirely according to her own wishes and ideas of propriety, &c."—and the answer is "that there will be *no* impediment to our correspondence, which, at all events, may continue"; and that in ten days her fate will probably be decided (meaning, I suppose, the separation). And then she adds her regrets at my selling N[ewstead] and wishes me to delay my journey to town for a short time.

I do not believe *he* as yet has any notion that she won't return; and if she does not, there are probably some who will believe that I have been tampering with her in the way of dissuasion, which will arise entirely from her timing things ill. It is, however, not the fact; if I have said anything on y^e^ subject, it has rather been in favour of her return—at least, when she thought of it I told her she was quite right.

I should not have said so much on this subject, but you expressed a wish to hear of it; and if it bores you it shan't be repeated. You see there is no love in

the case, and that I do not write of it "*con amore*," as I did from Aston.

All places are, I presume, nearly alike in this Lapland; but N[ewstead] has always suited me better than any other—and I do not dislike it more now than heretofore.

I mentioned yesterday that Augusta was here, which renders it much more pleasant, as we never yawn or disagree; and laugh much more than is suitable to so solid a mansion; and the family shyness makes us more amusing companions to each other than we could be to any one else?

Ever y^rs^, B.

P.S. Will you address your answer to London?

NEWARK, *February 6th*, 1814.

MY DEAR L^Y^ M^E^,—I am thus far on my return to town, and having passed the Trent (which threatens a flood on y^e^ first opportunity), I hope to reach town in tolerable plight.

Mr. Claughton has been with us during the last two days at N[ewstead], and this day set off for Cheshire, and I for the south, to prepare for a final and amicable arrangement.

M[ary Chaworth] I have not seen. Business and the weather, and badness of roads, and partly a late slight illness of her own, have interfered to prevent our meeting for the present, but I have heard a good deal from and of her. Him[1] I have not heard from nor of; nor have I seen him; nor do I know exactly where he is; but somewhere in the country, I believe. You will very probably say that I ought to have gone over at all events, and Augusta has also been trying her rhetoric to the same purpose, and urging me repeatedly to call before I left the country.[2] But I have been

[1] Mr. Chaworth Musters.

[2] In this connexion it may interest the reader to refer to Byron's letter to Monsieur Coulmann, undated (1823). See *Letters*, etc., vi. 233, 234. Byron there states that his sister dissuaded him from paying a visit to Mary, and that he was guided by the reasons she gave.

one day too busy, and another too lazy, and altogether so sluggish upon the subject, that I am thus far on my return without making this important visit on my way.

She seems in her letters very undecided whether to return to —— or no, and I have always avoided both sides of the topic, or, if I touched on it at all, it was on the *rational* bearing of the question.

I have written to you two long letters from the Abbey, and, as I hope to see you soon, I will not try your eye-glass and patience further at present.

Ever y^rs, B.

One[1] of my great inducements to that brilliant negociation with the Princess of Parallelograms, was the vision of our *family party*, and the quantity of domestic lectures I should faithfully detail, without mutual comments thereupon.

You seem to think I am in some scrape at present by my unequal spirits. Perhaps I am, but you shan't be shocked, so you shan't.

I won't draw further upon you for sympathy. You will be in town so soon, and I have scribbled so much, that you will be glad to see a letter shorter than usual.

I wish you would *lengthen* yours.

Ever my dear L^y M^e, B.

February 11th, 1814.

My dear Lady M.,—On my arrival in town on Wednesday, I found myself in what the learned call a dilemma, and the vulgar a scrape. Such a clash of paragraphs,[2] and a conflict of newspapers, lampoons of all description, some good, and all hearty, the Regent (as reported) wroth; L^d Carlisle in a fury; the *Morning Post* in hysterics; and the *Courier* in convul-

[1] This fragment is preserved with the foregoing letter, but bears no date, and may perhaps be misplaced.

[2] About his two stanzas on "Princess Charlotte weeping" in 1812. For these attacks see *Letters and Journals*, ii. 463–92, and Appendix VII., ibid.

sions of criticism and contention. To complete the farce, the Morning Papers this day announce the intention of some zealous Rosencrantz or Guildenstern to "play upon his pipe" in our house of hereditaries. This last seems a little too ludicrous to be true, but, even if so—and nothing is too ridiculous for some of them to attempt—all the motions, censures, sayings, doings and ordinances of that august body, shall never make me even endeavour to explain, or soften a syllable of the twenty words which have excited, *what* I really do not yet exactly know, as the accounts are contradictory, but be it what it may, "as the wine is tapped it shall be drunk to the lees." You tell me not to be "violent," and not to "answer." I *have not* and shall *not* answer, and although the consequences may be, for aught I know to the contrary, exclusion from society, and all sorts of disagreeables, the "*Demon* whom I still have served, has not yet cowed my better part of man"; and whatever I may, and have, or shall feel, I have that within me, that bounds against opposition. I have *quick feelings*, and not very *good nerves*; but somehow they have more than once served me pretty well, when I most wanted them, and may again. At any rate I shall try.

Did you ever know anything like this? At a time when peace and war, and Emperors and Napoleons, and the destinies of the things they have made of mankind, are trembling in the balance, the Government Gazettes can devote half their attention and columns, day after day, to 8 *lines*, written two years ago and now *republished only* (by an individual), and suggest them for the consideration of Parliament, probably about the same period with the treaty of peace.

I really begin to think myself a most important personage; what would poor Pope have given to have brought down this upon his "epistle to Augustus?"

I think you must allow, considering all things, public and private, that mine has been an odd destiny. But I prate, and will spare you.

Pray when are you most visible ? or will any of your "predilections" [1] interfere between you and me ?

How is C. ? It is a considerable compensation for all other disturbances, that she has left us in peace, and I do not think you will ever be further troubled with her anniversary scenes.

I am glad you like the Corsair, and was afraid he might be too larmoyant a gentleman for your favour. But all these externals are nothing to *that within*, on a subject to which I have not alluded.

Ever y^rs most affec^ly, B.

P.S. Murray took fright and shuffled in my absence, as you say, but I made him instantly replace the lines as before.[2] It was not time to shrink now, and if it were otherwise, they should never be expunged and never shall. All the edicts on earth could not suppress their circulation, after the foolish fuss of these journalists who merely extend the demands of curiosity by the importance they attach to two "doggerel stanzas," as they repeatedly call them.

February 18th, 1814.

My dear L^y M.,—R [Rogers ?] I should conceive not to be a very exact thermometer as to "spirits" [3]; but if his statement be true, it may not be necessary for me to tell *you* that there are better reasons for my so being, than all the paragraphs that ever were.

But to talk of common things. The Hollands, &c., have been worrying me to say, and do, I know not what, about Lord Carlisle, and I will neither do that, nor anything else, but be silent, which has put them in no very good humour.

The "Courier" has lately been most savage to Rogers, who appears to me to feel it angrily ; but I may be mistaken. I do not know to what you allude, nor does it matter ; whatever they *can*, they will say ; but

[1] "I have no predilections."—Princess Charlotte.

[2] The two stanzas were added to *The Corsair*.

[3] *Letters and Journals*, ii. 383.

if stepping across the room would stop them I would not cross it.

If they once get to a certain pitch, I shall do something or other probably, and effectual if possible; but I will go to the fountain-head, and not to the muddy little streams that flow from it.

I was nearly meeting you at Lady Lansdowne's and Miss Berry's, but did not go. Rogers says I should, as it looks as if I was disturbed; but you know I did not go out much last year, and have still less inclination this. But if I felt all *this* so deeply, what should prevent my leaving town, or the country? The fact is, I believe that I am much as usual, and they tell me in high health, which is more than usual.

I don't think that I shall be able to call upon you before C.'s arrival, and that will stop my visits for a still longer period. She has been quite silent, and all I most sincerely desire is that she may continue so; and I daresay she will—at least I hope it, for I do believe if one thing more than another would drive me out of my senses at this moment, it would be any renewal or intercourse with her, even by letters.

Pray believe me yrs. most truly and affectly., B.

February 21st, 1814.

My dear Lady M.,—I am not "forbidden" by ——, though it is very odd that like everyone she seemed more assured (and not very well pleased) of your influence than any other; but I suppose, being pretty certain of her own power—always said, "do as you please, and go where you like"—and I really know no reason for my not having been where I ought, unless it was to punish myself—or—I really do not know why exactly. You will easily suppose that, twined as she is round my heart in every possible manner, dearest and deepest in my hope and my memory, still I am not easy. It is this—if anything—my own. In short, I cannot write about it. Still I have not lost all self-command. For instance, I could at this moment be where I have been, where I would rather be than anywhere else, and

yet from some motive or other—but certainly not indifference—I am here, and here I will remain; but it costs me some struggles.

It is the misery of my situation, to see it as you see it, and to *feel* it as I feel it, on *her* account, and that of others. As for myself, it is of much less, and may soon be of no consequence. But I will drop y^e^ subject.

I am glad that you think poor Dallas acted rightly. I told him that I saw no reason why he should interpose, and Hobhouse said it was better not; but it was his own doing, and the facts are exactly as he stated. I neither forbade nor encouraged him, but left him as I hitherto always had—a free agent. If he was ever under any obligation to me—it is amply cancelled by the acknowledgement.[1]

As for the "Courier" gentleman, he has gone upon a wrong plan. A little fun would have done me more harm than all this exceeding gravity and rage. Who he is I know not. They tell me many different names, and I observe that Rogers and all of them fix upon that person they each most dislike. Is not this human nature? and worth all the paragraphs to catch the trait?

I am perhaps not so angry as I ought to be, but that won't alter me a jot. The instant I can find a clue, I shall not be at all less summary, because I have hitherto been silent. As to law, that would be no revenge at all, and besides it is so slow. The person will either betray himself, or be betrayed. If a hireling, he must be left to his wages; if in a higher circle, as is suspected,

[1] On 17 Feb. 1814, *The Courier*, an evening paper, inserted a paragraph accusing Lord Byron of having "received and pocketed" large sums for his poems. Why he should not have done so was not stated, but Byron, to use his own words, "had never yet received, nor wished to receive, a farthing for any" of his compositions. He had given the copyright of *Childe Harold* and *The Corsair* to R. C. Dallas, who in a letter to *The Courier* made a full and handsome acknowledgment of Byron's generosity towards him. According to Dallas, no part of the profits of *The Giaour* or *The Bride of Abydos* "ever touched Byron's hands, or were disposed of for his use." The *Courier* reviews are printed in *Letters and Journals*, ii. 464–5; cf. iii. 28 sqq., 41.

he will answer it. To apply to the editor, or involve myself in a squabble personally with a man who sells advertisements would, I am told, be ridiculous; or else I have no particular objection—anything to amuse anybody, is much the same to me at present.

As for the *world*, I neither know nor inquire into its notions. You can bear me witness that few ever courted it or flattered its opinions less. If it turns, or has turned against me, I cannot blame it. My heart is not in it, and my head better without it.

I don't know why I have scribbled this sheet full, for I mean to call upon you to-morrow. If I don't find you, I shall be more lucky some other day.

Ever yrs. most affect^ly, B.

[*March* 1814.]

My dear L^y M.,—I return A.'s letter with many thanks. I have had *one*, too. Next week I hope to see you. I am going down to Harrow for a day.

"Prosecute?" Oh no. I am a great friend of the liberty of the press, even at the expense of myself. Besides, do I not deserve all this? and am I not in reality much worse than they make me? They shall not break my heart or my spirit, personally or paragraphically; but if the man, whoever he is, were delivered bound hand and foot into my hands, I would cut the cords—though, if he turned out a gentleman, I might cut his throat instead. But that is to oblige the world, and its regulation, and not myself. I can be as savage and revengeful as anybody—but then it must be on someone in one's way—or at least my equal. I could have no great pastime in torturing earwigs, though I dislike them as much as wolves. But I was the beginner, and as long as I can be patient, I will; and when I cannot, depend upon it, I will break out effectually, or not at all.

Ever yrs., B.

March 30*th*, 1814.

My dear L^y M^e,—I have turned your book[1], at least your part of it, and think the *coincidence* unlucky for

[1] *Memoirs of Madame D'Arblay.*

many reasons.[1] In the first place, everybody will read Mᵉ D'Arblay, and though in a thousand points there is no resemblance nor design to make one, yet the *main* fact, at least as represented and believed by several, will be recalled afresh to people's recollection, and what is worse, to *her own*, and then Lady B[essborough] will have her flutters, and C. in one of her tempers, of which I can hardly tell whether the bad or the good are most to be dreaded, by what I have seen of her disposition. I have very little doubt that, though this was written long ago, she might not erase it with her many corrections, as something like it having really occurred (and of which she must have heard) would at least prevent her from being charged with *over* colouring her portraits, as the *scene* and the assembly and the *public display* would otherwise have certainly been thrown upon her as *French* and not English *manner*.

I am in *my* and *your* Albany rooms.[2] I think you should have been included in the lease.

I am sadly bewildered with hammering, and teaching people the left hand from the right; and very much out of humour with a friend, who tells me of a serious report that I am turning Methodist.

I suppose you will say, so I am, "in good works" (I don't mean scribblings), which with them are as naught.

Ever yrs., B.

P.S. I have seen the *E[dinburgh] R[eview]* and the compliments, which Rogers says, "Scott and Campbell won't like." Kind soul! It is very handsome in Jeffrey nevertheless; and what a little mind would not dare in favour of a former enemy; it is further valuable as coming from the monarch of existing criticism.

[1] Byron here alludes to Caroline Lamb's foolish conduct at Lady Heathcote's. A similar scene is depicted by Madame D'Arblay, i. 279 (Bickers & Son, four volumes), no date.

It is too long to quote; all but the wounding is exactly similar to Lady C. Lamb's affair.

[2] Lord Althorp's rooms. *Letters and Journals*, iii. 63.

April 8th, 1814.

I have been out of town since Saturday, and only returned last night from my visit to Augusta.[1]

I swallowed the D—l in ye shape of a collar of brawn one evening for supper (after an enormous dinner, too), and it required all kinds of brandies, and I don't know what besides, to put me again in health and good humour; but I am now quite restored, and it is to avoid your congratulations upon *fatness* (which I abhor and you always inflict upon me after a return from the country) that I don't pay my respects to you to-day. Besides which, I dislike to see L[d] M[e] standing by the chimney-piece, all horror and astonishment at my appearance while C. is within reach of the twopenny postman. To-day I have been very sulky; but an hour's exercise with Mr. Jackson, of pugilistic memory, has given me spirits, and fatigued me into that state of languid laziness, which I prefer to all other.

I left all my relations—at least my niece and her mamma—very well. [Col.] L[eigh] was in Yorkshire; and I regret not having seen him of course very much. My intention was to have joined a party at Cambridge; but somehow I overstaid my time, and the inclination to visit the University went off, and here I am alone, and not overpleased with being so.

You don't think the "Q[uarterly] R[eview] so very complimentary"; most people do. I have no great opinion on the subject, and (except in the E[dinburgh]) am not much interested in any criticisms, favourable or otherwise. I have had my day, have done with all that stuff; and must try something new—politics—or rebellion—or Methodism—or gaming. Of the two last I have serious thoughts, as one can't travel till we see how long Paris is to be the quarter of the Allies.

I can't help suspecting that my little Pagod[2] will

[1] At Newmarket.

[2] Bonaparte. "Ah, my poor little pagod has walked off his pedestal. He has abdicated they say. This would draw molten brass from the eyes of Zatanas." *Letters and Journals*, iii. 65.

play them some trick still. If Wellington, or one hero had beaten another, it would be nothing; but to be worried by brutes, and conquered by recruiting sergeants [1]—why there is not a *character* amongst them.

Ever yrs. most affect^ly, B.

April 18th, 1814.

My dear L^y M^E,—As I had no chance of seeing you except under that living padlock fixed upon you yesterday, I did not venture to your palace of silence this afternoon. I have as yet no intention of serving my sovereign "in the North," and I wish to know whether (if I did incline that way) you would not put Richard's question to me?

Though I think *that chance* off the cards,[2] and have no paramount inclination to try a fresh deal; yet, as what I may resolve to-day may be unresolved to-morrow, I should be not only unwilling, but unable to make the experiment without your acquiescence.

Circumstances, which I need not recapitulate, may have changed *Aunt's* mind; I do not say that *Niece's* is changed, but I *should* laugh if their judgments had changed places, and exactly reversed upon that point. In putting this question to you, my motive is all due to selfishness, as a word from you could and would put an end to that, or any similar possibility, without my being able to say anything but "thank you." *Comprenez vous?* all this mystery? it is what no one else will. I think I need hardly be more intelligible. To conclude with a quotation, "all this may be mere speculation; if so, think no more of it."

Ever yours, B.

[1] An allusion to Blücher.

[2] Evidently this alludes to Miss Milbanke's refusal, and the possibility of both Lady Melbourne and the young lady having changed their minds as to the "fitness of things." Lady M. knew too much now, he supposed, for any desire that Byron should marry her niece, but although Miss Milbanke had said "No" on the last occasion, she might now say "Yes."

April 24th, 1814.

My dear Lady M[E],—I wish to know whether I may go to L[Y] Hard[wick]e's on Thursday or not, because you may be sure I will do what you like on that point —as on all others—saving one—though nevertheless I am vastly obedient thereto.

What became of you last night? I don't know, but I got into a roundabout conversation with Miss M., and was obliged to call carriages, a service in which I got wet through, and consequently took refuge in my own, and came away.

To-day I am going with your Chevalier of Troy, to the Prin[ss] of W[s] to dine and dawdle away the evening. I suppose at least that C. is quiet, and I really think you pay me too great a compliment, and her none, to imagine any doubts of our mutual decorum and discretion, and all that.

Ever yrs. most inveterately, B.

April 25th, 1814.

My dear L[Y] M[E],—Thanks as to C—— though the task will be difficult; if she is to determine as to kindness or unkindness, the best way will be to avoid each other *without appearing* to do so, or if we jostle, at any rate not to bite.

Oh! but it is "worth while," I can't tell you why, and it is *not* an "*Ape*," and if it is, that must be my fault; however, I will positively reform. You must however allow that it is utterly impossible I can ever be half so well liked elsewhere, and I have been all my life trying to make someone love me, and never got the sort that I preferred before. But positively she and I will grow good and all that, and so we are *now* and shall be these three weeks and more too.

Yesterday I dined at the Princess's,[1] where I deported myself like a white stick; till, as the Devil would have it, a man with a flute played a solemn and somewhat tedious piece of music. Well, I got through that, but down sate Lady Anne H. to give evidence at the

[1] Princess of Wales.

pianoforte with a Miss Somebody (the "privy purse," in a pair of spectacles—dark green) these, and the flute man, and the "damnable faces" (as Hamlet says) of the whole party, threw me into a convulsion of uncourtly laughter, which Gell and Lady Crewe encouraged; at least the *last* joined in it so heartily that the whooping-cough would have been an Æolian harp in comparison to us both. At last I half strangled it, and myself, with my kerchief; and here I am grave and sedate again.

You will be sorry to hear that I have got a physician just in time for an old complaint, "troublesome, but not dangerous," like Lord Stair and L^d^ Stair's, of which I am promised an eventual removal. It is very odd; he is a staid grave man, and puts so many questions to me about *my mind*, and the state of it, that I begin to think he half suspects my senses. He asked me how I felt "when anything weighed upon my mind?" and I answered him by a question, why he should suppose that anything did? I was laughing and sitting quietly in my chair the whole time of his visits, and yet he thinks me horribly restless and irritable, and talks about my having lived *excessively* "out of all compass" some time or other; which has no more to do with the malady he has to deal with than I have with the Wisdom of Solomon.

To-morrow I go to the Berrys; on Wednesday to the Jerseys; on Thursday I dine at L^d^ Grey's, and there is L^y^ Hard[wick]e in the evening; and on Friday I am asked to a Lady Charleville's, whom I don't know,[1] and where I shan't go. We shall meet, I hope, at one or two of these places.

I don't often bore you with rhyme—but as a wrapper to this note I send you some upon a brunette, which I have shown to no one else. If you think them not much beneath the common places you may give them to any of your "album" acquaintances.

Evers y^rs^ most truly, B.

[1] Catherine, daughter and sole heiress of Thomas Townley Dawson, of the Cremorne family. She married Lord Charleville in 1798.

April 29th, 1814.

I delivered "mamma's message"[1] with anatomical precision; the *knee* was the refractory limb was it not? Injured I presume at prayers, for I cannot conjecture by what other possible attitude a female knee could become so perverse.

Having given an account of my embassy, I enclose you a note which will only repeat what you already know, but to obviate a possible *Pharisaical* charge, I must observe that the first part of her epistle alludes to an answer of mine, in which, talking about that eternal Liturgy, I said that I had no great opinions one way or the other, assuredly no decided unbelief, and that the *clamour* had wrung from me many of the objectionable passages in the pure quintessence of the spirit of contradiction, &c., &c. She talks of "talking" over the same metaphysics. To shorten the conversation, I shall propose the Litany—"from the crafts and assau——" aye, that will do very well; what comes next, "deliver us," an't it? Seriously, if she imagines that I particularly delight in canvassing the creed of St. Athanasius, or prattling of rhyme, I think she will be mistaken; but you know best. I don't suspect myself of often talking about poets, or clergymen, of rhyme or the rubrick; but very likely I am wrong; for assuredly no one knows *itself*, and for aught I know, I may for for these last two years have inflicted upon you a world of theology, and the greater part of Walker's rhyming dictionary.

I don't know what to say or do about going. Sometimes I wish it, at other times I think it foolish, as assuredly my design will be imputed to a motive, which, by-the-bye, if once fairly there, is very likely to come into my head, and *failing*, to put me into no very good humour with myself. I am not now in love with her; but I can't at all foresee that I should not be so, if it came "a warm June" (as Falstaff observes), and, seriously, I do admire her as a very superior woman, a

[1] Probably this refers to a letter from Miss Milbanke.

little encumbered with Virtue, though perhaps your opinion and mine, from the laughing turn of "our philosophy," may be less exalted upon her merits than that of the more zealous, though in fact less benevolent advocates, of charity schools and Lying-in Hospitals.

By the close of her note you will perceive that she has been "frowning" occasionally, and has written some pretty lines upon it to a friend (he or she is not said). As for rhyme I am naturally no fair judge, and can like it no better than a grocer does figs.

I am quite irresolute and undecided. If I were sure of *myself* (not of her) I would go; but I am not, and never can be, and what is still worse, I have no judgement and less common sense than an infant. This is *not affected* humility; with *you* I have no affectation; with the world I have a part to play; to be diffident there, is to wear a drag-chain, and luckily I do so thoroughly despise half the population in it, that my insolence is almost natural.

I enclose you also a letter written some time ago, and of which I do not remember the precise contents; most likely they contradict every syllable of this, no matter. Don't plague yourself to write; we shall meet at Mrs. Hope's I trust.

Ever yours, B.

April 30th, 1814.

MY DEAR LADY M^E^,—*You*—or rather *I*—have done *my A* much injustice. The expression which you recollect as objectionable meant only "loving" in the *senseless* sense of that wide word, and it must be some selfish stupidity of mine in telling my own story, but really and truly—as I hope mercy and happiness for her—by that God who made me for my own misery, and not much for the good of others, *she* was not to blame, one thousandth part in comparison. She was not aware of her own peril till it was too late, and I can only account for her subsequent "*abandon*" by an observation which I think is not unjust, that women are much

more *attached* than men if they are treated with anything like fairness or tenderness.

As for *your* A, I don't know what to make of her. I enclose her last but one, and *my* A's last but one, from which you may form your own conclusions on both. I think you will allow mine to be a very extraordinary person in point of *talent*, but I won't say more, only do not allow your good nature to lean to my side of this question; on all others I shall be glad to avail myself of your partiality.

Now for *common* life. There is a party at Lady J[erse]y's on Monday and on Wednesday. I am asked to both, and excused myself out of Tuesday's dinner because I want to see Kean in Richard again.

Pray *why* did you say I am getting into a *scrape* with R.'s[1] moiety? We must talk to somebody. I always give you the preference when you are disposed to listen, and when you seem fidgeted, as you do now and then (and no wonder, for latterly I do but repeat), I turn to anyone, and she was the first that I stumbled upon. As for anything more, I have not even advanced to the tip of her little finger, and never shall unless she gives it.

You won't believe me, and won't care if you do, but I really believe that I have more true regard and affection for yourself than for any other existence. As for my A, my feelings towards her are a mixture of good and diabolical. I hardly know one passion which has not some share in them, but I won't run into the subject.

Your niece has committed herself perhaps, but it can be of no consequence; if I pursued and succeeded in that quarter, of course I must give up all other pursuits, and the fact is that my wife, if she had common sense, would have more power over me than any other whatsoever, for my heart always alights on the nearest *perch*—if it is withdrawn it goes God knows where—but one must like something.

Ever yrs., B.

[1] Probably Lady Rancliffe.

April—May 1*st*, 1814.

MY DEAR LADY M^E^,—She says "if la tante"; neither did she imagine nor did I assert that you did have an opinion of what Philosopher Square calls "the fitness of things."

You are very kind in allowing us the few merits we can claim: *she* surely is very clever, and not only so but in some things of good judgement: her expressions about A^a^ are exactly your *own*, and these most certainly without being aware of the coincidence, and excepting our one *tremendous* fault. I know her to be in point of temper and goodness of heart almost unequalled; now grant me this, that she is in truth a very *loveable* woman and I will try and not love any longer. If you don't believe me, ask those who know her *better*. I say *better*, for a man in love is blind as that deity.

You yourself soften a little in the P.S., and say the letters "make you melancholy." It is indeed a very *triste* and extraordinary business, and what is to become of us I know not, and I won't think just now.

Did you observe that she says, "if la tante approved she should"? She is little aware how much "la tante" has to *dis*approve, but you perceive that, without intending it, she pays me a compliment by supposing you to be my friend and a sincere one, whose *approval* could alter even *her* opinions.

To-morrow I am asked to Lady Jersey's in the evening, and on Wednesday again. Tuesday I go to Kean and dine after the play with Lord Rancliffe, and on Friday there is Mrs. Hope's: we shall clash at some of them.

What on earth can plague you? I won't ask, but am very sorry for it, it is very hard that one who feels so much for others should suffer pain herself. God bless you. Good night.

Ever yours most truly, B.

P.S. A thousand loves and excuses to Mrs. Damer with whom I *weep* not to dine.

P.S. *ad.* It, indeed, puzzles me to account for ——:

it is true she married a fool, but she *would* have him ; they agreed, and agree very well, and I never heard a complaint, but many vindications, of him. As for me, brought up as I was, and sent into the world as I was, both physically and morally, nothing better could be expected, and it is odd that I always had a foreboding and I remember when a child reading the Roman history about a *marriage* I will tell you of when we meet, asking *ma mère* why I should not marry ×.

Since writing this I have received the enclosed. I will not trouble you with another, but *this* will, I think, enable you to appreciate her better. She seems very *triste*, and I need hardly add that the reflection does not enliven me.

May 16th, 1814.

My dear L^{y} M^{E},—Your letter is not without effect when I tell you that I have *not written* to-day and shall weigh my words when I write to —— to-morrow. I *do* thank you, and as somebody says—I hope not Iago —" I think you know I love you well."

As for C., we both know her for a foolish wicked woman. I am sorry to hear that she is still fermenting her weak head and cold heart to an *ice cream* which will only sicken everyone about her : as I heard a girl say the other night at *Othello*, when I asked her how she liked it, " I shall like it much better when that woman [a bad actress in Desdemona] is fairly smothered." So if C. were fairly shut up, and bread and watered into common sense and some regard to truth, no one would be the worse, and she herself much the better for the process.

By-the-bye (*entre nous*, remember) she has sent for Moore on some mysterious concern, which he will tell me probably, at least if it regards the old eternal, and never sufficiently to be bored with, story.

I dine at Lord Jersey's to-morrow—that is, I am asked, and (to please you) I am trying to fall in love, which I suppose will end in falling *out* with somebody, for I am

perplexed about two and would rather have both. I don't see any use in one without a chance at least of the other.

But all this is nonsense. I won't say a word more about your grievance, though I cannot at all conceive what there can be more *now* than ever to plague you anywhere, particularly as C. has nothing to do with it.

Horace Twiss has sent me his melodies, which I perceive are inscribed to you; don't you think yourself lucky to have escaped one of *my* dedications? I am going to dine at Wm. Spencer's to-day. I believe I told you the *claret* story at Mrs. Hope's last ball but one.

Ever yours most affectionately, B.

P.S. I am just elected into Watier's.[1] Shall I resume *play*? That will be a change, and for the better.

May 28th, 1814.

DEAR LADY M[ELBOURN]E,—I have just received a wrathful epistle from C. demanding letters, pictures, and all kinds of gifts which I never requested, and am ready to resign as soon as they can be gathered together; at the same signal it might be as well for her to restore *my* letters, as everybody has read them by this time, and they can no longer be of use to herself and her five hundred sympathizing friends. She also complains of some barbarous usage, of which I know nothing, except that I was told of an *inroad* which occurred when I was fortunately out; and am not at all disposed to regret the circumstance of my absence, either for her sake or my own. I am also menaced in her letter with immediate *marriage*, of which I am equally unconscious; at least *I* have not proposed to anybody, and if anyone has to me I have quite forgotten it. If she alludes to L[ad]y A[delaide] F[orbes] she has made a sad mistake; for not a syllable of love ever

[1] In Piccadilly, at the corner of Bolton Street. Originally founded for musical gatherings, it became a great centre of gambling, and here Brummell lost much of his money. *Letters and Journals*, ii. 128.

passed between us, but a good deal of heraldry, and mutual hatred of music; the merits of Mr. Kean, and the excellence of white soup and plovers' eggs for a light supper. Besides, Lady R., who is good authority, says that *I* do not care about L^y^ A., nor L^y^ A. about me, and that if such an impossibility did occur, she could not possibly approve of it, nor anyone else; in all which I quite acquiesce with y^e^ said Lady R., with whom, however, I never had a moment's conversation on the subject; but hear this from a friend, who is in very bad humour with her, and not much better with me; why, I can't divine, being as innocent and ill-used as C. herself in her very best story. If you can *pare* her down to good humour, do. I am really at this moment thinking as little of the person with whom she commits me to matrimony, as of herself; and I mean to leave London next week if I can. In the meantime, I hope we shall meet at Lady Grey's, or Clare's this evening.

Ever y^rs^, most affectionately, B.

June 10th, 1814.

Dear Lady M^e^,—I don't remember one syllable of such a request; but the truth is that I do not always read y^e^ letters through. She has no more variety than my maccaw; and her note is not much more musical. Judge then, whether (being also in y^e^ delectable situation which winds up the moral of your note) I can attend the y^e^ [*sic*] same tones if there is a nightingale, or a canary bird to be got by love, or money.

All you say is exceeding true; but who ever said, or supposed that you were not shocked, and all that? You *have* done everything in your power; and more than any other person breathing would have done for *me*, to make me act rationally; but there is an old saying (excuse the Latin, which I won't quote, but translate), "Whom the gods wish to destroy they first madden." I am as mad as C. on a different topic, and in a different way; for I never break out into scenes, but am not a whit more in my senses. I will, however,

not persuade *her* into any *fugitive* piece of absurdity, but more I cannot promise. I love no one else (in a proper manner), and, whatever you may imagine, I cannot, or at least do not, put myself in the way of—let me see—Annabella is the most prudish and correct person I know, so I refer you to the last emphatic substantive, in her last letter to you.

There is that little Lady R. tells me that C. has taken a sudden fancy to *her*—what can that be for? C. has also taken some offence at Lady G. Sloane's frigid appearance; and supposes that Augusta, who never troubles her head about her, has said something or other on my authority—*this* I remember is in *C.'s* last letter—one of her twaddling questions I presume—she seems puzzled about me, and not at all near the truth. The Devil, who ought to be civil on such occasions,[1] will probably keep her from it still; if he should not, I must invent some flirtation, to lead her from approaching it.

I am sorry to hear of your *tristesse*, and conceive that I have at last guessed or perceived the real cause; it won't trouble you long; besides, what is it or anything else compared with our melodrame? *Take* comfort, you very often give it.

Ever y^rs, B.

June 21st, 1814.

Since I wrote last night I have received the two enclosed. What shall I do about Ph. and her epistles? since by her own account they run great hazard in their way to her. I am willing to give them up, but she says not a syllable about mine; no matter.

The other is from A.,[2] and prim and pretty as usual. Somebody or other has been seized with a fit of amazement at her correspondence with so naughty a person-

[1] Byron frequently refers to the civility of the devil. The expression is taken from the *Memoirs of De Grammont*, vol. i, chapter viii: "The devil, who ought to be civil upon such occasions, forgot himself in the present instance."

[2] Miss Milbanke.

age, and this has naturally given a fillup of contradiction in my favour which was much wanted.

Ever y^rs, B.

June 26th, 1814.

My dear L^y M^E,—To continue the conversation which Lord C^r has broken off by falling asleep (and his wife by keeping awake) I know nothing of C.'s last night adventures; to prove it there is her letter which I have not read through, nor answered nor written these two months, and then only by *desire* to keep her quiet.

You talked to me about keeping her out. It is impossible; she comes at all times, at any time, and the moment the door is open in she walks. I can't throw her out of the window: as to getting rid of her, that is rational and probable, but *I* will not receive her.

The Bessboroughs may take her if they please; I have no hesitation in saying that I have made up my mind as to the alternative, and would sooner, much sooner, be with the dead in purgatory, than with her, Caroline (I put the name at length as I am not jesting), upon earth.

She may hunt me down—it is the power of any mad or bad woman to do so by any man—but *snare* me she shall not: torment me she may; how am I to bar myself from her! I am already almost a prisoner; she has no shame, no feeling, no one estimable or redeemable quality.

These are strong words, but I know what I am writing; they will avail nothing but to convince you of my own determination. My first object in such a dilemma would be to take——[1] with me; that might fail, so much the better, but even if it did—I would lose a hundred souls rather than be bound to C. If there is one human being whom I do utterly *detest* and *abhor* it is she, and, all things considered, I feel to myself justified in so doing. She has been an adder in my path ever since my return to this country; she has often belied

1 Name carefully blotted and scored out by Byron.

and sometimes betrayed me; she has crossed me everywhere, she has watched and worried and grieved and been a curse to me and mine.

You may show *her* this if you please—or to anyone you please; if these were the last words I were to write upon earth I would not revoke one letter except to make it more legible.

Ever yours most sincerely, BYRON.

June 28th, 1814.

MY DEAR L^Y M[ELBOURN]E,—I must assure you that I did not see nor hear of C. on Saturday, and that all bolts, bars, and silence can do to keep her away are done daily and hourly. I had written a long, savage letter about her last night, which I will send another time.

You must send me back the enclosed, *both A.*'s and the other immediately, as *one* must be returned by the post. I need not say be secret: though, after all, neither are of any importance, but will amuse you as they do me, with the *fusses* into which our friendship, quarrels, and relationship appear to involve people to the third and fourth generation. You will see how *demure* I must have been, and the passage about *Ma* (and the separate answer) is something in A.'s style, and like all very correct people when they set about secrecy.

Pray forgive, and laugh, and be silent, and believe me,

Most affec^ty y^rs, B.

P.S.—You need not write, but enclose these back by the bearer if you can. I must send *this* back by the Post.

July 2nd, 1814.

DEAR LADY M.,—I leave town to-morrow for two or three days, and as I shall probably be occupied at Cambridge, I may as well "say my say" with regard to C. "Conquer!" Oh no—*crush*—if you

please, and not unlikely whether she goes or stays. She perplexed me very much with questions and guesses—and as I verily believe her growing actually and seriously disordered in her intellects, there is no conjecturing what she may assert or do, as far as I can judge from observation, not less towards myself than others (though in a different way to the last), she cannot be in her senses. I was obliged to talk to her, for she laid hold of Hobhouse, and passed before where another person and myself were discussing points of Platonism; so frequently and remarkably, as to make us anticipate a scene; and as she was masked, and dominoed, and it was daylight, there could be little harm, and there was at least a probability of more quiet. Not all I could say could prevent her from displaying her green *pantaloons* every now and then; though I scolded like her grandfather upon these very uncalled for, and unnecessary gesticulations. Why do you say that I was mistaken about another mask with you? I never even pretended to guess at so pious a person, nor supposed they were in so profane an assembly, and now I am convinced they were not there at all; since you tell me of the illness of the little boy, who so happily recovered, by the timely devotion of *her* staying away to take care of him.

To be sure, I thought I saw somebody very like; but there is no trusting to likenesses, and it is not easy to unmask anybody, even without their pasteboard.

I don't wonder at your dislike to C., &c., and whatever absurdity, or enormity, her madness may plunge me into, I do think you have already done at least tenfold more than anyone on earth would have done; and if you were to do more, I should conceive you no less mad than herself. I thank you for the past, for the thousandth time, and as to the present and future I shall parry her off as well as I can, and if foiled, I must abide by the consequence: so there's an end. After all, it is not much your concern (except as far as good nature went), and rests between me and the Blarneys, whom I regard not. To *yourself* I own that

I am anxious to appear as having done all that could be done to second your wishes in breaking off the connection, which would have been effectual with any, or every other person.

I am glad you were amused with ——'s correspondent. —— is very much astonished, but in very good humour, and I too—on account of my *theory*, of which, by-the-bye, I despaired very much at first in the present instance. I think I should make a good Tartuffe ; it was by paring down my demeanour to a very quiet and hesitating deportment, which however my natural shyness (though that goes off at times) helped to forward, that I ensured the three days' recollection of ——'s amiable ally.

Good-bye, for the present. I am still sadly sleepy with the wear and tear of the last two nights, and have had nothing for my trouble.[1] I wanted very much to talk to you, but you preferred Robinson. The next time he breaks a leg I shall be less sorry, and send you to nurse him.

I am in amity (the purest, and of course most insipid) with a person ; and one condition is, that I am to tell her her faults without reserve. How long do you think such a treaty, fully observed, would endure ? I will tell you—five minutes. I was assailed by a Mask for some time, teazing enough, but with a sweet voice, and someone of whom all I could learn was that " I had said of her, she *had been* very beautiful." This quite cured my desire of discovery, as such a

[1] The members of Watier's Club gave a fête, at Burlington House, in honour of the Duke of Wellington's return, on 1 July 1814. The incidents mentioned in this letter probably occurred on that occasion. Hobhouse (*Recollections*, i. 156) says : " At nine put on my Albanian Dress and went with Byron to the masquerade. Seventeen hundred persons sat at ease in the Supper-room. Byron as a monk looked very well. The Duke of Wellington was there in great good humour, and not squeezed to death. Lady C. Lamb played off the most extraordinary tricks—made Skeffington pull off his red Guard's coat, walked up into the private rooms. I walked home between six and seven."

speech could never be forgiven, so I told her, and got away.

Good-bye again.

Ever most affectionately, B.

[*July*] *2nd*, 1814.

My dear L^y M^s,—As the last two letters amused you, perhaps *these* may (they seem to arrive *both* always by the same post); only have the goodness to think of the return of the said *post*, and to let me have it for the impatient, who will be in such a fidget if not possessed of it again immediately.

I was up till seven this morning, and the last person who left the room (I believe). I had a long conversation with C. (closely masked, that is *she*, but always trying to indicate who she was, not to me so much as to everybody), but nothing more, or very particular.

I am so sleepy that I hope you will say something to enliven or at least awaken me, as you went to bed earlier; but don't trouble yourself to write *now*, as I know your fusses in a morning.

Believe me, ever y^rs most truly, B.

August 15th, 1814.

Dear Lady M^s,—Perceiving by the paper that you are in town (where I have only been within these last few days), I have sent you some grouse (four brace), and hope that they are fresh and in eatable order.

I shall leave London before y^e end of the week, or about it; and if you are not inscrutable and unvisitable by mortals, will take my chance of finding you some morning at home. I have been at the sea,[1] and in it; and am going to Newstead, I believe for a week or so, and thence I know not whither. You will not be sorry to hear that of C. I have heard nothing for

[1] At Hastings with Hodgson. See letter to Moore, *Letters and Journals*, iii. 117.

some time; and that there is every reason to believe that we are come to a conclusive and happy separation.

I see that the Continent is happy in the presence of Lady Blarney, the Princess of Wales, and various other persons of honour; and I hear that one friend, of indifferent memory, M^e de Staël, has been bowed out of Paris for some of those bright remarks which will doubtless appear in her next preface. Ever y^rs, B.

Byron to Hobhouse

NEWSTEAD ABBEY, *September 13th*, 1814.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Claughton has relinquished his purchase, and twenty-five thousand pounds out of twenty-eight ditto, paid on account, and I am Abbot again—it is all signed, sealed, and *re*-delivered.

So much for your enquiry—he wishes to *renew*—but I will first see an' the monies be palpable and tangible, before I re-contract with him or others—though if he could complete, I should have no objections, on the old terms.

But now for other matters:—if a circumstance (which may happen but is as unlikely to happen as Johanna Southcote establishing herself as the real Mrs. Trinity) does not occur[1]—I have thoughts of going direct and directly to Italy—if so, will you come with me?

I want your opinion first, your advice afterwards, and your company always:—I am pretty well in funds, having better than £4,000 at Hoare's—a note of Murray for £700 (the price of *Larry*)[2] at a *year's* date last month, and the Newstead Michaelmas will give me from a thousand to 15—if not 1800 more. I believe it is raised to between 3 and 4,000, but then there is land upon *hand* (which of course payeth no rent for the present, and be damned to it); altogether I should have somewhere about £5,000 tangible, which I am not at all disposed to spend at home. Now I would wish to set apart £3000 for the tour, do you think

[1] This refers to his second proposal to Miss Milbanke. See *Letters and Journals*, iii. 135.

[2] *Lara.*

that would enable me to see all *Italy* in a gentlemanly way ? with as few servants and luggage (except my aperients) as we can help. And will you come with me ? You are the only man with whom I could travel an hour except an "ἰάτρος" ; in short you know, my dear H——, that with all my bad qualities (and d—d bad they are to be sure) I like you better than anybody —and we have travelled together before, and been old friends, and all that, and we have a thorough fellow-feeling, and contempt for all things of the sublunary sort—and so do let us go and call the "Pantheon a cockpit," like the learned Smelfungus.[1]

The cash is the principal point—do you think that will do ?—viz. £3,000 clear—from embarkation onwards.

I have a world of watches and snuff boxes and telescopes—which would do for the Mussulmans, if we liked to cross from Otranto and see our friends again.

They are all safe at Hammersley's—would my coach do ?—*beds* I have and all canteens, &c. from *your* man of Ludgate Hill—with saddles, pistols, tromboni, and what not.

I shall know to-morrow, or next day, whether I can go or not, and shall be in town next week, where I must see you, or hear from you ; if we set off, it should be in October, and the earlier the better.

Now don't engage yourself, but take up your map and ponder upon this.

Ever, dear H., yours most affectionately, B.

Note by Hobhouse in pencil on the back of this letter :—

1814. A post or two after this letter brought me another letter, stating that he was going to be married to Miss Milbanke. J. C. Hobhouse.

Byron to Lady Melbourne

Newstead Abbey, [*Sunday*] *September* 18*th*, 1814.

My dear Lady M^e^,—Miss Milbanke has accepted me; and her answer was accompanied by a very kind letter

[1] Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*, 1760.

from your brother. May I hope for your consent, too? Without it I should be unhappy, even were it not for many reasons important in other points of view; and with it I shall have nothing to require, except your good wishes now, and your friendship always.

I lose no time in telling you how things are at present. Many circumstances may doubtless occur in this, as in other cases, to prevent its completion, but I will hope otherwise.

I shall be in town by Thursday [22 Sept.], and beg one line to Albany, to say you will see me at your own day, hour, and place.

In course I mean to reform most thoroughly, and become "a good man and true," in all the various senses of these respective and respectable appellations. Seriously, I will endeavour to make your niece happy; not by "my deserts, but what I will deserve." Of my deportment you may reasonably doubt; of her merits you can have none.

I need not say that this must be a *secret*. Do let me find a few words from you in Albany, and believe me ever

Most affec^{tly} y^{rs}, B.

ALBANY, *September 23rd*, 1814.

MY DEAR L^{Y} M^{E},—Many thanks. I am just arrived. I thought, at least I heard, that *C.* was gone to France. See her I will not, if I can help it, and if I did, nothing could come of it now, though the consequences might be as unpleasant; but no matter, much plague, if not misery, had probably been saved by her absence.

Perhaps it would be as well to tell her at once; it can hardly be kept a secret long, and the quantity of letters which lately passed between Seaham and Newstead[1] can hardly have escaped the servants (the letter-

[1] This seems to settle the point, and disposes of Hobhouse's statement (*Recollections*, ii. 193) that Byron was at his sister's house, near Newmarket, when he wrote to propose marriage to Miss Milbanke. He wrote on 14 Sept. from Newstead, and the reply was received on the 18th.

bags being lost since my last visit), a species of persons from whom I suspect C. derives most of her information. If Annabella has any firmness, if she has even any *woman* in her composition, *C.* will only lose her labour by trying to mar the match. I am glad you liked A.'s letter to you. Augusta said *that* to *me* (the decisive one) was the best and prettiest she ever read. It was really perfect, and so much the more welcome, as almost all the former ones were written evidently under embarrassment of feeling and expression.

I have written to my agent, who is coming to town to get my property in matrimonial array. Whether A. is to have any fortune or not, I do not know, and am not very anxious; at least *I* will not be *off* under any circumstances, unless she sets me the example. The only thing is this: if she has nothing I had better sell N[ewstea]d again, as I can thus give her a better settlement. Mr. C[laughto]n has renewed his offers (on the *old* terms, and begs the refusal; that is, to *complete* his former bargain, if I sell; but of these things hereafter. I could also sell R[ochdale] for a round sum. However, I can only repeat, and very sincerely, that I will settle on her all I can; and that her circumstances will make no difference to me (if Sir R. is dipped, as I have heard is the case), and my property, such as it is, shall go as far as it may, for her. I would do almost anything rather than lose her now.

Pray let me hear from you. I only wait for my lawyer's arrival, and a day or two's consultation with him, to go down to Seaham, where I am invited "most cordially." But I must see *you* first. I have so much to say, and am writing to no purpose, but answer me.

Ever y^{rs} most affect^{ly}, B.

P.S. I heartily hope this will go on, to say nothing of your niece and myself. How much more comfortable we should all be (if C. were but rational), meeting occasionally like other people, and not in this half hostile way. I really shall be all the better for it; one half of my faults and scrapes have arisen from not

being settled, and I think that the (Bourbon) Philips of Spain were not more disposed to be docile to their moieties than your nephew (I hope) that is to be.

As to Annabella, you cannot think higher of her than I do. I never doubted anything but that she would have me. After all it is a match of *your* making, and better had it been had *your* proposal been accepted at the time. I am quite horrified in casting up my moral accounts of the two intervening years, all which would have been prevented, and the heartache into the bargain, had she—but I can't blame her, and there is time yet to do very well.

My pride (which my schoolmaster said was my ruling passion) has in all events been spared. She is the only woman to whom I ever proposed in that way, and it is something to have got into the affirmative at last. I wish one or two of one's idols had said No instead; however, all that is over. I suppose a married man never gets anybody else, does he? I only ask for information.

September 26th, 1814.

MY DEAR L^Y M^E,—I sent you a long letter on *Saturday*, which I hope you received safely.

Annabella has written to me, and says that "a continuance of secrecy appears unnecessary, and that she has already told her own friends."

I only wait to see my agent, and arrange my worldly affairs, to go down to S[eaham]. But do let me see you first, or at any rate, write to me, in answer to my last. You had better tell *C.* at once; it cannot be helped, she must do her worst, if so disposed. I am very sorry for it, if such is her disposition, and must bear it as well as I can.

Excuse this scrawl, it is the hundredth of to-day, and believe me ever my dear *Zia*,

Y^RS most dutifully, B.

September 28th, 1814.

MY DEAR L^Y M^E,—I am truly grieved to hear of

Lady Cowper's illness,[1] as she must ever be one of the most honoured of my new relatives (that are to be). Do tell me when she is better, as I shall feel anxious, not only for her, but you, till I know.

All *my* connections are in great grief on the loss of my first cousin, Sir Peter Parker, a very gallant and popular character, whom even his wife could not help loving, poor fellow.[2] You will have seen his death in the *Gazette* of our late American victory. I have not seen him since we were boys together; but all our family, even to the selfishness of the Howards, must be sorry for him. Lady P[r] was much attached to him.

The secret is a secret no longer, for Annabella has written to her uncle, L[d] W[entworth], who is pleased to be pleased with it; and it has besides been imparted to the whole *city* of Seaham, which, it seems, is very glad too. And as (to use her words) "her happiness" has thus far been "made known," it may probably reach the ears of *C.*, and, in that case, interfere confoundedly with mine.

I don't much admire this kind of publicity, on account of the fuss and foolery it produces. It has always seemed to me very odd that so much ceremony should be made of a thing so very simple in itself; and it is so much worse in the country, that I would rather be married, no matter where, but I should think any place better than the house of one's papa. I quite agree with you, that it were best over; but I have several previous arrangements that must take place before I can even go down there. I shall make no limitation about settlements, as far as my property will go, nor did I pay my addresses to her with the notion of her being a very considerable *parti*, so that I am much more

[1] Amelia Lamb, daughter of Lord Melbourne, married in 1806 the fifth Earl Cowper, who died in 1837. Lady Cowper, in 1839, married Lord Palmerston.

[2] Sir Peter Parker, the second Baronet, was born in 1786. He commanded H.M.S. *Menelaus*, and was killed in an attack on a body of American Militia near Baltimore. Byron wrote his elegy.

afraid of her, and hers, being disappointed in that respect than myself.

Don't let me bore you, but when L^y^ Cowper is better, and you have leisure, allow me to hear from you, and believe me ever and aff^ately^

Y^rs^, B.

P.S. I have heard and seen nothing of C., and of course hope I shall not.

October 1st, 1814.

MY DEAR L^y^ M.,—Your description of my uncle is infinitely inviting. By your account he is an *Elzevir* Edition of Mr. Penn of facetious memory; and to crown all, the most important personage of "both your houses"; if so, the longer I stay away the better; for I never could recommend myself to an old person in my life; and the circumstance of these expectations of A[nnabella]'s would do no good.

I am sure, without intending it, I should offend in some way or other. I never tried to keep any one in good humour, without blundering.

I cannot go to Seaham, for I know not how long. My agent can't leave his son-in-law, L^d^ P[ortsmouth] at present, and wants me to go there, which is not in my power; at least, it is very much out of my way, and my inclination, so I must wait his time, which will not be very long. The moment I can go to Seaham I will, and yet I feel very odd about *it, not her*; it is nothing but shyness, and a hatred of strangers, which I never could conquer.

I wish so much to see you. I have a thousand things to say about, not C. nor any *person* you may imagine, not a *married* person either, nor a *mistress* either, and yet a woman of course; in short, it is something that was going on very well, not exactly with *me*, but with, or through the medium of × (you may guess by those with whom I have lately been), when lo, upon a scheme, or rather the prospect of a scheme, with *another* of the family's speculation, a perplexity

ensued, which of course put an end to that. In short, it is such an intricate and involved piece of management altogether, that I cannot explain it now, but if you guess to whom it refers, do not *breathe* it, for A. (neither of the A.'s), would ever forgive me, to say nothing of other letters of the alphabet. My proposal to A[nnabella] followed this ; and now from some fresh circumstances, my confidante feels a difficulty in breaking the acceptance which ensued upon it, to her friend. *Why*, I cannot exactly see, since it never came to anything like either with her, and what really was, was always rather *implied* than expressed by either party.[1]

Then *C.*, I cannot help any mischief she may do ; it will be a pity, because Annabella appears to like me, and I am sincerely disposed to do her justice, and to love her with all my heart.

I have not seen C. nor shall I if I can help it.

It gives me much pleasure to hear that L^{dy} C^{r} is better, and your sprain ? Deuce take it, *you* shall leave your friendship for me as an inheritance to L^{y} Cow^{r}, and as I hope it will not devolve for these forty years, by that time I may be " rational " enough to receive my legacy with propriety.

Y^{rs} ever, B.

October 4th, 1814.

My dear L^{y} M^{E},—I never threw obstacles in the way ; on the contrary, she has been more urgent than even you, that I should go to S[eaham] and wished me to set out from N[ewstead] instead of London. She wished me much to marry, because it was the only

[1] In order to understand this mystery it may be as well to explain that either Byron's sister, or some other *confidante*, had entered into correspondence with a daughter of Lady Stafford, with a view to finding out whether a proposal of marriage by Byron would be acceptable. The " perplexity which ensued " is explained in Byron's letters to Lady Melbourne (4 and 7 Oct.). The young lady in question married (27 Dec. 1814) Henry, Earl of Surrey, only son of the Duke of Norfolk. The story of Byron's meeting with her will be found in *Letters and Journals*, iii. 96, 599.

chance of redemption for *two* persons, and was sure if I did not that I should only step from one scrape into another, particularly if I went abroad. I had settled everything to go to Italy with Mr. Hobhouse, if A[nnabella] had not accepted me.

The other was undoubtedly her *favourite*, but no one could acquiesce in this with a better grace, as I could convince you by her letters and conduct at that time.

Her friend after a certain time was seized with a panic, on some family scheme (which I will tell you when we meet) of a *compact elsewhere*. The fact is, the little girl had no will of her own; and might not be aware of what she had been doing; but her frequent epistles, and excessive attachment to × *both* so much more numerous and friendly than ever before, with sentences which were *not* to be answered, or if answered, replied to in a *particular* manner, etc., with a hundred little things, which I don't understand, but which convinced × of her disposition; all produced this episode in our drama. × always thought her the *only* person perhaps who would suit. It is my suspicion (but I am probably wrong), that *la Mère* [1] was not ignorant either; but that circumstances, a better prospect in another quarter, and the never to be adjusted family quarrel made her alter; and the young one was perhaps her dupe. Of course, the demoiselle and × were the only persons who made their appearance on the stage, and *I* was supposed or rather presumed to know nothing of it; and *la Mère* also. But this I can hardly conceive; you will recollect that it never came to *yes* or *no*, or anything direct.

It went off thus: after one very long letter, which × answered, came another full of alarms—"she had been so foolish," and was in such a dilemma; such and such persons were coming, and such and such a scheme was to be brought forward, what was she to do? I made × write a kind but satisfactory answer, taking it *all* on herself, and getting the other out of it completely, and there it ended, and they are all good friends still. I

[1] Lady Stafford.

then said to ×, after consoling her on the subject, that I would try the next myself, as she did not seem to be in luck. The prospect (for A[nnabella] had been bewildering herself sadly, and did not appear to be much better disposed towards me than formerly) was not very promising; however, the stars, I presume, did it. The rest you know.

× has written to A. to express how much all my relations are pleased by the event, &c. &c.

It *is* in the *Morning Post* of this day, from the Durham paper; so that C. *will* hear it soon. With regard to any "*hitch*," how *can* either party be off? It shall not be my doing in any case; but, surely, you cannot wonder that I should wish to arrange my property first; and not proceed hurriedly in a business which is to decide her fate and mine for ever.

Ever y^rs^ most truly, B.

P.S. I enclose a letter which will explain what I have been saying; but *answer* me by return, as I shall feel *odd* till I get it again.

October 5th, 1814.

My dear L^dy^ M^e^,—C., I suspect, has been at her cursed tricks again; the D[urham] paragraph is contradicted in the *M. Chronicle*. I have written to Perry, but it could only be *her*, no one else has the motive or the malignity to be so *petty*.

If she proceeds, I can only appeal to you whether I have not done all in my power to break off; indeed, I have neither heard from, nor seen her since July (I think); well, I must bear it, I presume. ×'s friend has written to her just the letter she ought, full of congratulations, so that is all right, and × was mistaken. I did not, I assure you, *know* the contents of K[innaird's] letter; but he is an old friend of mine, and if he is an old friend of mine, and if he likes me, you must at least allow him to be a good-natured soul. The moment I have seen Hanson, to whom I have written most peremptorily, I shall set out for S[eaham]. In the

meantime do all for me you can. I assure you these delays are not of my deserving.

Ever y^rs most truly, B.

It is *not C.*, I beg her pardon. I think I know the hand which Perry has sent me, and if I can bring it home, woe to the writer.

October 7th, 1814.

My dear L^y M^E,—I cannot fix yet upon the *contradictory* paragraph writer, but I think it is *Claughton*, it is very like his hand, but Kinnaird, who saw it, *doubted*, and so must I. Let it sleep for the present. × is the least selfish person in the world; you, of course, will never believe that either of us can have any right feeling. I won't deny this as far as regards me, but you don't know what a being she is; her only error has been my fault entirely, and for this I can plead no excuse, except passion, which is none. I forgot to say that × and her friend had one interview in the summer, which the friend came several miles to encounter, and it was that more than anything else that made × believe in the practicability of her scheme.[1] When they parted × said, "May I write whatever I please without getting you into any dilemma?" &c. The answer was, *yes*. All this made me believe that the exquisite politician who brought her into the world could not be altogether ignorant. The new plan is this (a secret, of course, and do *you* keep it better than *I* have in this instance), young *Howard*, the *Norfolk*, and a Mr. Bellasyse, his uncle or cousin, are invited, and he is to take his choice of the family, so that *both* are in requisition for the present, and as × could not persuade me to wait the reversion (notwithstanding all the probabilities that the younger would be the winner), I hope she may secure him; as she is the favourite of the uncle it is not unlikely. All this the poor little soul wrote clandestinely to × in her eagerness to

[1] The scheme being, to arrange a marriage between Byron and Lady Charlotte Sophia, eldest daughter of George, Marquis of Stafford, K.G.

vindicate herself, and betrayed this pretty piece of policy. Whether it will *do* I don't know, but thus they are at present. Mr. Hanson comes to town to-day, so that I hope to get down to S[eaham] soon. I hear nothing but praises and wonders of my wife elect (× says that she hears her called "very pretty" too, by somebody), and it is a most popular match amongst all my relations and acquaintances. You very much mistake me if you think I am lukewarm upon it; quite the reverse; and I have even the conceit to think that I shall suit her better than a better person might; because she is not so cold as I thought her; and if I think she likes me, I shall be exactly what she pleases; it is her fault if she don't govern me properly, for never was anybody more easily managed. *You ought* to like this match, for it is one of your making; and I hope not the worst of your performances in that way. You can't conceive how I long to call you Aunt. I hope then to see a great deal of you; and even of Brocket in the course of time.

Yrs. ever, B.

P.S. I heard from A[nnabella] to-day. She says L[d] W[entworth] "pleases me by his strong prepossession in your favour. He is proud of his future nephew." I must insist on your being equally prepossessed, *ma tante*. I thought you would be glad to hear this from A. *Not a word* of or from *C*.

October 7th, 1814.

My dear L[dy] M[e],—Hanson is come at last, and is ready to meet Sir R[alph]'s solicitor the moment we know who he is; £60,000, that is, £3,000 a year, is the proposed settlement on our part; if not enough we can make it more. N[ewstea]d can be charged with it for the present; but subject to trustees, so as *still* to *sell* it, and secure that sum to A[nnabella] from the produce.

H[anson] still thinks N[ewstead] must bring about £120,000, as it has been much improved; and the rents

raised beyond what *I* could have done, because I should not have liked to turn out the old (though stupid) tenants, and all this has been effected. You know I can *afford* to sell it for £25,000 *less* than before, as that is already received of C[laughto]n's forfeit. On Rochdale we have not decided; but it is certainly valuable, though want of money has prevented me from working it to advantage. Many, and most of my debts are paid; there are still, however, several to pay.

H. is decided for the resale of N[ewstead] because, although the rents are nearly quadrupled, yet the income is much short of what would arise from the purchase money; and the house requires too much keeping up.

What is to be done about *C.*? Ought I to write to her? I am sure no one can be more disposed to pay her every *proper* attention. I hope that she is not the paragraph-mover. If she hates me, she cannot hate A[nnabella], and should consider her a little. I must do C. justice in saying that I have neither heard from, nor of her; nor have we met.

If you think it right to say anything on the subject; in short, I know not what to do or say, my situation is so difficult with her. To preserve a *medium* is what would be desirable. I would willingly follow your judgment, but it seems so hard upon *you* to make you the arbitress between us. Whatever new attachments she may have formed should at least induce her to consider the old as entirely cancelled. *If* there be any complaints, methinks I might complain too; but with these things I have nothing to do, though I suspect she means to charge *all* her *wrong* to my account. If she would but have a little sense, and consideration, how much it would conduce to all our comfort; to her own, for there never were persons for whom I felt more kindness than you and all yours, and it will be very hard on me to be proscribed from that intimacy which this connection with your niece will sanction and improve.

Ever y^rs^ most affectionately, B.

Augusta tells me that G.[1] says they are "*betting* away at Newmarket, whether I am to be married or not." She has had a very kind answer from A[nnabella].

Is not this amusing, or rather provoking? A *fuss* whether one wishes it or not.

October 9th, 1814.

My dear L^y^ M^s^,—I will answer C. to-morrow; pray tell her so, and say everything proper for me.

Your approbation of my intentions gives me great pleasure. Hanson said £50,000 or £2,500 a year; but agreed with me that it was best to do things handsomely, and to err on the right side, if at all; and acquiesced in making it £3,000 instead. I must run the risk of Sir R[alph]'s "possibility," nevertheless devoutly praying for L^y^ M[ilbanke]'s long life; or a young and *pretty* stepmother-in-law in case she should leave us.

Enclosed are two letters, one from A. and the other from A ×. I wish to convince you of the disposition of the one ×, and to ask your opinion about going; but why, I know it already, and will go to S[eaham] the moment I can. I shall be delighted to see L[ord] M[elbourn]e. I do hope *C.* will continue in this mood; it becomes her; and it is so provoking to see her throwing away her own happiness by handfuls, when everyone is disposed to forgive, and treat her kindly if she would but suffer them.

Ever y^rs^ most affect^y^, B.

October 11th, 1814.

My dear L^y^ M[elbourn]e,—Your Lord has this moment left me—very kind—and I take it kindly. He looked a little suspicious at a *miniature* near the chimney. It was one of L^y^ O[xford], and not of C[aroline] as he probably suspected; but I did not know *how* to make him perceive this, as he seems short-sighted; and yet I feel uneasy at the idea that he should

[1] Col. George Leigh, Augusta's husband.

imagine for a moment that *C.'s* was amongst them, which, upon my honour, it is *not*. If you can fall upon any way to assure him of this, I wish you would. Perhaps it may be only my fancy, as I judge a good deal from looks, but I take his visit as such a compliment, that I would not have him think I paid him so bad a one in return.

I enclose you an answer to *C.*; it is *short*, and I hope the proper *medium*. I was glad to hear from L[d] M. that Lady C[owpe]r is so much better.

Ever y[rs] most affec[tly], B.

October 12*th*, 1814.

DEAR LADY M[E],—Were I in the fortunate situation of L[d] C., I don't know whether I should return so "Post-hastily," but I am pretty sure I should not have set out without my Penelope. As to being "married 9 years," that to be sure rather enhances the merits of his L[d]ship's conjugal expedition, but don't equal mine, for I would travel twice the distance to see the same person without being married at all. Well, but I *am* going, am I not? What would mine aunt have? You forget that I shall not be a whit nearer marriage when I get there; and really, without being more impatient than other people, you must allow that it is rather a trying situation to be placed—near and with one's intended—and still to be limited to intentions only.

I have bored you with so many letters lately that you will not be sorry to hear that I am interrupted, and must conclude this. Ever y[rs], B.

Monday, *October* 17*th*, 1814.

DEAR LADY M[E],—I have spared you for the last three or four days; but though I perceive by y[e] papers, and heard from L[d] M[elbourne] that you are at present monopolised by Royalty, I can't help writing to you a few lines, to which I require no answer.

My agent was to have set off this day to meet Mr. Hoar (of whom you gave me some hints) at Durham,

but he will be detained in the country, or in town, perhaps, for this week, and will then proceed to discuss with Sir R.'s people upon the spot.

I shall not set off till a day or two after Hanson; and then I must take Newstead in my way, but shall not remain there above forty-eight hours.

There have been several intimations to me from all quarters to proceed; which I am very willing to do, but as lawyers are as essential in this business as clergymen and post-horses, I must wait for the former before I harness either of the latter. May I trust that my answer to C. was satisfactory, and ask, like King Claudius of Hamlet, how "was the argument: was there no offence in't?"

I am now quite alone with my books, and my maccaw. Douglas Kinnaird, with whom I have mostly been, is gone to Brighton, and I miss him a good deal. On Friday, Lord H., Douglas, *Kean* (*the Kean*), and myself, dined together.

Kean is a most wonderful compound, and excels in humour and mimicry. The last talent is rather dangerous; but one cannot help being amused by it. In other respects, in private society, he appears diffident, and of good address; on the stage, he is all perfect in my eyes.

I am horribly low-spirited, a malady which don't often assail me; and, for fear it should be infectious, I may as well finish this epistle, which I don't well know why I began.

Ever y^rs^ most truly, B.

P.S. *Tuesday.*—I open my letter to tell you that y^e^ "Scotch Politician" (of whose scheme, I believe, I subsequently told you) has succeeded. Howard has taken the *elder* and ×'s friend[1]; it is not yet declared, because *his sire* is not yet apprized of the future Duchess, but settled in all other respects. I suppose

[1] Howard, Earl of Surrey, afterwards Duke of Norfolk. The elder was Charlotte Sophia Leveson-Gower. Her younger sister married the Marquess of Westminster in 1819.

I am telling you what you have not yet heard; at least, it is told me as a thing not known. Keep it so. Does not all this amuse you? at least, *my* having told you how it was to be, before-hand: I think I only want coolness to have made a tolerable Jesuit in the various plots and counterplots of which I am aware.

Byron to Hobhouse

October 17th, 1814.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—If I have not answered your very kind letter immediately, do not impute it to neglect. I have expected you would be in town or near it, and waited to thank you in person.

Believe me, no change of time or circumstance short of insanity, can make any difference in my feelings, and I hope, in my conduct towards you. I have known you too long, and tried you too deeply; a new mistress is nothing to an old friend, the latter can't be replaced in this world, nor, I very much fear, in the next, and neither in this nor the other could I meet with one so deserving of my respect and regard.

Well, H.—I am engaged, and we wait only for settlements "and all that" to be married. My intended, it seems, has liked me very well for a long time, which, I am sure, her encouragement gave me no reason to suspect; but so it is, according to her account.

The circumstances which led to the renewal of my proposal I will acquaint you with when we meet, if you think such material concerns worth your enquiry.

Hanson is going down next week to Durham, to confabulate with Sir R.'s agents on the score of temporalities, and I suppose I must soon follow to my sire-in-law's that is to be.

I confess that the character of wooer in this regular way does not sit easy upon me. I wish I could wake some morning, and find myself fairly married.

I do hate (out of Turkey) all fuss, and bustle, and ceremony so much; and one can't be married, according to what I hear, without *some*.

I wish, whenever this same form is muttered over

us, that you could make it convenient to be present. I will give you due notice :—if you would but take a wife and be coupled then also, like people electrified in company through the same chain, it would be still further comfort.

Good even. Ever yours most truly, B.

Byron to Lady Melbourne

October 19th, 1814.

My dear Lady M[elbourn]e,—I wrote to you with the same tidings yesterday. She [1] hardly knew him, but seemed quite terrified at the idea of her dilemma ; if it was proposed to her as had been intimated ; and from that × released her at once. I hope × has burnt her letters, which she particularly desired. She behaved extremely well ; for, malgré " the Politician," she wrote secretly (when the rest were all at the L[d] races), a long explanatory epistle to × foretelling what has occurred. I think *him* in great luck. Annabella is in all respects all I could wish ; and more than I deserve ; my only regret is her having taken so long a period to decide upon a very simple proposition ; when, had she but said the same thing two years, even a year ago, what confusions and embarrassments, good and bad, might have been prevented. There are three or four which you know—and one or two you do not. Now if she had given me even a *distinct*, though distant hope, I would have acted with a view to it. As it was, in my pursuit of strong emotions and mental *drams*, I found them, to be sure ; and intoxicated myself accordingly, but now I am sobered my head aches, and my heart too. Next week I hope and intend to be at Seaham. Hanson *should* have been at Durham now, but will set off in a few days, and I shall follow him with all speed.

I hear from Ann[abell]a very often ; and the more I see of her, the more I find reason to congratulate

[1] Lady Charlotte Leveson-Gower hardly knew Lord Surrey at the time when he proposed marriage.

myself and to thank *you*; for, after all, it could never have taken place but through your breaking the ice.

Ever y^rs most aff^ly, B.

October 20th, 1814.

My dear Lady M^e,—Hanson is the Government Solicitor of the Stamp Office, and was put in by L^d Grenville. I have known him since I was a child; as to his integrity, or ability, I cannot speak. I suppose, as all men think "patrons capricious and mistresses fickle, but everyone excepts *his own* mistress, and *his own* patron," most people except their own lawyer. Perhaps the sale of New[stead] and Claughton's forfeiture (£25,000) may be some proof of his talent, for on all law points Hanson certainly beat him as the result proved, and the said Claughton was also a lawyer.

All I can say is, he expressed himself extremely anxious and pleased about the match, but a little more inquisitive than I have been about A.'s expectations. I expect him in town daily. The journey to Durham was his own proposal, and he wrote to Hoar, who did not seem overpleased with Sir R.'s letter, calling him "agent" instead of "Counsel," and God knows what mummery and jargon in the way of technicals. I only wait to forward Hanson, and shall embark first for News[tead] for a day, and so on to Seaham. I can assure you I find the not being married exceedingly embarrassing, and wish I had been so these twelve hours.

Of Lady Staff[ord] "I tell the tale as told to me," and I believe I was one of the first who knew of the scheme. They were not certain *which* of the girls he would take, but he was to have his choice, by the account of one of them. Now that he has fixed on *her* I wish it may go on; because she is the best little creature on earth; and anything but designing, or she would never have betrayed this to ×, which was quite a work of supererogation. × has written to congratulate her.

Oh, it is a delightful farce altogether; and one of the scenes that reconcile one to existence, for if it were not for the things of this kind, and apple-women tumbling down in the street, there would be nothing to laugh at.

"The opinions" about A. and B. If she takes the least trouble, I am the most manageable animal that was ever driven. And so her "eyes are like yours"; a little less mischievous, I hope; though I believe you see without them; at least, you observe things that escape all other optics.

I am infinitely obliged by the wish for my society to replace the Prince Regent and L[d] M., but Lord Cow[pe]r would be a much more lively proxy for both than I could hope to be; still I can't conceive a more pleasant party, if my intrusion did not spoil it.

But alas! I can only send my sighs by the heavy coach, and this letter by the light one.

Ever y[rs] most truly, B.

Lady Melbourne to Byron

BROCKET HALL [HERTS], *October 28th*, 1814.

DEAR LORD B.,—I find that we shall certainly be in Town on Monday. If you should not have left it pray let me see you on Tuesday morning, at any time most agreeable to yourself—but if it should so happen that you are setting out on Tuesday, you might call upon me Monday evening. *Les entrées sont libres pour un Neveu à toute heure*—as, much as I have been wishing you to go, I cannot help acknowledging that I am selfish enough to feel that I shall rejoice to find you in London.

Yours ever, E. M.

Byron to Lady Melbourne

NEWARK, *October 31st*, 1814.

MY DEAR LADY M[E],—Your letter was delivered just as I was leaving town, or I do believe a day sooner would have stopped me; since I had much rather not set out on my present expedition at this

moment. However, I am thus far on my way to S[eaham]. On Saturday I got to ×'s,[1] and stayed till late on Sunday, and here I am.

Last night I slept at the inn (Wansford) where it seems Sir Hal and the Countess Rosebery dined, in very good spirits and quite at their ease. They slept at Eaton afterwards in the most decisive way, so that all appears quite regular.

Don't you think they are not much better than some people you may have heard of, who had half a mind to *anticipate* their example, and don't yet know whether to be glad or sorry they have not ?

I don't think *he*[2] much admires my marriage. He knows that I have made × my heiress, and, though it is not a stupendous inheritance, yet, as he supposes the life a bad one, &c., &c., I can see that he don't like my chance or my wife's being in his way. I remember when we met in town he advised me not to be in a hurry; and I know but one motive why he should say this, except a good one, and for that I never credit anybody, having no more *trust* in me than a turnpike gate, though my motto exacts it from everyone else.

Well, I am proceeding very slowly to S[eaham]. The last news I heard was that L[d] W[entworth] was leaving it. He had gone to D[urham] to direct Mr. Hoar most particularly to be as quick in the settling as possible, as his (L[d] W.'s) " whole heart was set upon the match." All this is very fine, but it was very foolish dragging me out of town before my lawyer had arrived. L[d] W. will be gone before I arrive, which I don't regret, but how the rest of us are to proceed, I know not. I shall not stay above a week, if I can help it ; don't write till you hear from me *there*, for I am not sure I shall go now, as Newstead is so near, and I have something to do there. Poor Mrs. Chaworth is mad in town ; it came upon her at Hastings in the house where she succeeded A[ugusta] and me as tenant. Chaworth went to her ; but has since gone to Yorkshire to hunt. She is still

[1] The Leighs at Newmarket.

[2] Colonel Leigh.

ill, and I fear dangerously, as to sense, if not even life. I am in very ill humour, and

Yours affectionately, B.

SEAHAM, *November 4th*, 1814.

MY DEAR LADY M[E],—I have been here these two days; but waited to observe before I imparted to you—"my confidential counsel," as Master Hoar would say—my remarks.

Your brother pleases me much. To be sure his stories are long; but I believe he has told most of them, and he is to my mind the perfect gentleman; but I don't like Lady M[ilbanke] at all. I can't tell why, for we don't differ, but so it is; she seems to be everything here, which is all very well; and I am, and mean to be, very conformable, and dutiful, but nevertheless I wish she and mine aunt could change places, as far as regards me and mine. A[nnabella]'s meeting and mine made a kind of scene; though there was no acting, nor even speaking, but the pantomime was very expressive. She seems to have more feeling than we imagined; but is the most *silent* woman I ever encountered; which perplexes me extremely. I like them to talk, because then they *think* less. Much cogitation will not be in my favour; besides, I can form my judgments better, since, unless the countenance is flexible, it is difficult to steer by mere looks. I am studying her, but can't boast of my progress in getting at her disposition; and if the conversation is to be all on one side I fear committing myself; and those who only listen, must have their thoughts so much about them as to seize any weak point at once. However, the die is cast; neither party can recede; the lawyers are here—mine and all—and I presume, the parchment once scribbled, I shall become Lord Annabella.

I can't yet tell whether we are to be happy or not. I have every disposition to do her all possible justice, but I fear she won't govern me; and if she don't it will not do at all; but perhaps she may mend of that fault. I have always thought—first, that she did not

like me at all; and next, that her supposed after-liking was *imagination*. This last I conceive that my presence would—perhaps has removed—if so, I shall soon discover it, but mean to take it with great philosophy, and to behave attentively and well, though I never could love but that which *loves*; and this I must say for myself, that my attachment always increases in due proportion to the return it meets with, and never changes in the presence of its object; to be sure, like Mrs. Damer, I have "an opinion of absence."

Pray write. I think you need not fear that the *answer* to *this* will run any of the risks you apprehend. It will be a great comfort to me, in all events, to call you aunt, and to know that you are sure of my being

Ever y^rs, B.

November 6th, 1814.

MY DEAR LADY M^E,—Annabella and I go on extremely well. We have been much together, and if such details were not insipid to a third person, it would not be difficult to prove that we appear much attached, and I hope permanently so. She is, as you know, a perfectly good person; but I think, not only her feelings and affections, but her *passions* stronger than we supposed. Of these last I can't as yet positively judge; my observations lead me to guess as much, however. She herself cannot be aware of this, nor could I, except from a habit of attending minutely in such cases to their slightest indications, and, of course, I don't let her participate in the discovery, in which, after all, I may be mistaken.

Our lawyers are in a fair train of concluding their parchment passports to matrimony; and I am happy to say in the most amicable way, without disputes, demurs, or more delays. When quite done, which may be in a fortnight, we are to marry *quietly*, and to set off by ourselves to Halnaby for *the* moon; and afterwards probably to a house (Farleigh)[1] which I have taken in

[1] Farleigh Wallop, an old seat of the Earls of Portsmouth about 4½ miles from Basingstoke. The house was burned down in 1661 and rebuilt by the first Earl.

Hampshire, a large, and comfortably retired mansion, which I know by having been there some years ago, and I think it will suit us very well. Lady M[ilbanke] will probably have informed you of the settlements, &c. I am making all the proposed arrangements about N[ewstead] and R[ochdale], and her present fortune is to be I think £20,000, which is all that is *certain*. I *would* not, as you may suppose, embarrass the old ones by boring them to bind themselves down about futurity. They say that L^{d} W[entworth] has declared her, by will, his heiress; indeed he himself went over to Durham, and told Hoar so, in positive terms. But he best knows whether he will adhere to such intention. *I* wish to trust as little as possible to expectations, though even *hers* seem very sanguine. If realised it will all be very well, and if not, should she herself continue what I firmly believe her, I could bear; indeed I could hardly regret any posthumous disappointments, unless I thought that she suffered from her connection with me. I am not, however, romantic, nor indifferent to these, which are good things in themselves; but simply do not wish to set our hopes too high, since their completion will not be the less pleasant because they were temperate, while their moderation, in case of the contrary, would save us any violent vexation.

I think we all *improve*, and suit very well. I endeavour to conform to their habits, which is not difficult; and I would hope that I am not a troublesome inmate. *They* are very kind, and A. and I of course still kinder. I hope she will be happy. I am sure she can make, and keep me so if she likes. I wrote to you a day or two ago, and hope to sign myself soon, not more affectionately, but more entirely,

Yours, B.

November 13th, 1814.

My dear Lady M^{E},—I delivered your letters, but have only mentioned y^{e} receipt of your last to myself.

Do you know I have grave doubts if this will be a

marriage now? Her disposition is the very reverse of our imaginings. She is overrun with fine feelings, scruples about herself and her disposition (I suppose, in fact, she means mine), and to crown all, is taken ill once every three days with I know not what. But the day before, and the day after, she seems well; looks and eats well, and is cheerful and confiding, and in short like any other person in good health and spirits. A few days ago she made one *scene*, not altogether out of C.'s style; it was too long and too trifling, in fact, for me to transcribe, but it did me no good. In the article of conversation, however, she has improved with a vengeance, but I don't much admire these same agitations upon slight occasions. I don't know, but I think it by no means improbable, you will see me in town soon. I can only interpret these things one way, and merely wait to be certain, to make my obeisance and "exit singly." I hear of nothing but "feeling" from morning till night, except from Sir Ralph, with whom I go on to admiration. L^y M[ilbanke] too, is pretty well; but I am never sure of A. for a moment. The least word, and you know I rattle on through thick and thin (always, however, avoiding anything I think can offend her favourite notions), if only to prevent me from yawning. The least word, or alteration of tone, has some inference drawn from it. Sometimes we are too much alike, and then again too unlike. This comes of system, and squaring her notions to the devil knows what. For my part, I have lately had recourse to the eloquence of *action* (which Demosthenes calls the first part of oratory), and find it succeeds very well, and makes her very quiet; which gives me some hopes of the efficacy of the "calming process," so renowned in "our philosophy." In fact, and *entre nous*, it is really amusing; she is like a child in that respect, and quite caressable into kindness, and good humour; though I don't think her temper *bad* at any time, but very *self* tormenting and anxious, and romantic.

In short, it is impossible to foresee how this will end

now, any more than two years ago; if there is a break, it shall be her doing not mine.

Ever y^rs^ most truly, B.

From 13 Nov. to 3 Jan. 1815 there is little or no evidence of Byron's movements. The only known letters are on 14 Dec. to Moore and 31 Dec. to Murray (see *Letters*, etc., iii. 163, 164). Byron was probably at that time in London. Hobhouse, in his *Recollections of a Long Life* (i. 167), under date 20 Nov., says he called on Byron, who was coming to his rooms at the Albany on that day. On 23 Nov. Byron was at Cambridge, voting for Mr. Clarke for the Professorship of Anatomy, and on that occasion he was cheered by the students in the Gallery. On 24 Nov. he and Hobhouse went to London, and on 2 Dec. he dined with Kinnaird. On 24 Dec. Byron and Hobhouse started for Seaham, stopping at Six Mile Bottom on the way till 26 Dec. After passing through Wansford and Newark, they reached Sir Ralph Noel's place, Seaham, at 8 p.m. on 30 Dec. Hobhouse thus describes Miss Milbanke: "Rather dowdy-looking, and wears a long and high dress, though she has excellent feet and ankles. The lower part of her face is bad, the upper expressive, but not handsome; yet she gains by inspection" (*Recollections of a Long Life*, i. 192).

On the 2 Jan. following Byron was married to Annabella Milbanke, Sir Ralph's only child. The ceremony took place in the drawing-room of the Mansion House, the service being conducted by the Rev. Thomas Noel, rector of Kirkby Mallory. Hobhouse, in his *Recollections of a Long Life* (i. 196), says that after the ceremony "Byron was calm and as usual. I felt as if I had buried a friend. At a little

before twelve I handed Lady Byron down stairs and into her carriage. When I wished her many years of happiness she said, 'If I am not happy it will be my own fault.'"

The honeymoon was passed at Halnaby House, near Darlington, in the same county. [R.E.]

Byron to Lady Melbourne

HALNABY, *January 3rd*, 1815.

MY DEAREST AUNT,—We were married yesterday at ten upon y^e^ clock, so there's an end of that matter, and the beginning of many others. Bell has gone through all the ceremonies with great fortitude, and I am much as usual, and your dutiful nephew. All those who are disposed to make presents may as well send them forthwith, and pray let them be handsome, and we wait your congrats besides, as I am sure your benediction is very essential to all our undertakings.

Lady M[ilbanke] was a little hysterical, and fine-feeling; and the kneeling was rather tedious, and the cushions hard; but upon the whole it did vastly well. The drawing-room at Seaham was the scene of our conjunction, and then we set off, according to approved custom, to be shut up by ourselves.

You would think we had been married these fifty years. Bell is fast asleep on a corner of the sopha, and I am keeping myself awake with this epistle—she desires her love, and mine you have had ever since we were acquainted.

Pray, how many of our new relations (at least, of mine) mean to own us? I reckon upon George and you, and Lord M[elbourne] and the Countess and Count of the Holy Roman Empire[1]; as for *Caro* and Caro George, and *William*, I don't know what to think, do you?

I shall write to you again anon; at present, receive this as an apology for that silence of which you were

[1] Lord and Lady Cowper.

kind enough to complain; and believe me ever most affectionately thine,

BYRON.

P.S. I enclose you an order for the box; it was not at liberty before. The week after next will be mine, and so on alternately. I have lent it, for the present week only, to another person; the next is yours.

January 7th, 1815.

DEAREST AUNT,—Bell sent you a few lines yesterday as an accompaniment to an answer of mine to an epistle of Caro's about her present, which of course she will be very glad to receive. I wonder C. should think it necessary to make such a preface; *we* are very well disposed towards her, and can't see why there should not be a peace with her as well as with America.[1]

About this, and everything else, I will do as you like. If you prefer that we should quarrel with that branch of the cousinhood, I shall have no objection; but I suppose George [2] and Lord Cowper, and I and our female appendages, are not to be involved in the like bickering any more now than heretofore.

Bell and I go on extremely well so far, without any other company than our own selves as yet.

I got a wife and a cold on the same day, but have got rid of the last pretty speedily. I don't dislike this place, it is just the spot for a moon; there is my only want, a *library*, and thus I can always amuse myself, even if alone. I have great hopes this match will turn out well. I have found nothing as yet that I could wish changed for the better; but time does wonders, so I won't be too hasty in my happiness.

I will tell you all about the ceremony when we meet. It went off very pleasantly, all but the cushions, which

[1] A Treaty of Peace between the United States and England was signed at Ghent on 24 Dec. 1814, but it was not ratified until 17 Feb. 1815.

[2] George Byron.

were stuffed with peach-stones I believe, and made me make a face which passed for piety.

My love to all my relatives; by the way, what do they mean to give *me*? I will compromise, provided they let me choose what I will have instead of their presents, nothing but what they could very well spare.

Ever Aunt, thine dutifully, B.

P.S. Lady Byron sends her love, but has not seen this epistle; recollect, *we* are to keep our secrets and correspondence as heretofore, mind that.

Byron to Hobhouse

[HALNABY], *January 11th*, 1815.

MY DEAR H.,—You will oblige me much by insisting on an interview with Signor Hanson, to whom I have again written with some anger, and much wonderment at his not seeing you, or writing to me.

I will do what you like about it, only choose me a counsel. William Adam an' thou wilt.

The post presses, but more soon.

Lady Byron is well and with me.

Very much yours, BYRON.

Lady Melbourne has the box, but I will write to her to transfer to you for any night or nights.

[HALNABY] *January 19th*, 1815.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—I rejoice in the escape of your premises; *you* did not set them on fire, did you?

You have made but one mistake in your epistle to Spooney [Hanson], but that's a thumper. I *do* mean to sell Newstead, and that the moment it can be sold, but that does not prevent my being anxious about Rochdale—viz. to sell it too—Newstead I won't keep, if a fair price can be had for it.

I sent you a box order—hast thou it? I wish to hear from Hanson, before I fix upon a counsel, and then you shall hear. Pray when thou writest next, address to Seaham, where we go on Saturday.

Excuse this scrubby letter, all the ink's out.

Ever thine most truly, B.

SEAHAM, *January 22nd*, 1815.

MINE AUNT,—This day completes my 27th year of existence, and (save a day) my "three weeks after marriage." I am four years and three months older than Bell, who will be twenty-three on May 27th. I suppose this is a fair disproportion.

Yesterday I came here somewhat anent my imperial will. But never mind, you know I am a very good-natured fellow, and the more easily governed because I am not ashamed of being so; and so Bell has her own way and no doubt means to keep it; for which reason I prodigiously applaud your having written *two* letters to her, and only three to me, and one of them full of Lady Blarney (by way of emetic), &c., &c., which I presume you meant me to show. By the way, I cannot sufficiently admire your cautious style since I became chickenpecked, but I love thee, *ma tante*, and therefore forgive your doubts (*implied*, but not expressed), which will last till the next scrape I get into; and then we shall wax confidential again, and I shall have good advice. I look upon you as my good genius. I am scribbling in my dressing-room, and Bell is in bed, so you ought to think the length of this epistle a huge effort of complaisance.

I sent C. an answer, which produced no rejoinder; thus all is right, at least I hope so. We are all well, and Sir R. is going on Tuesday to a county meeting, to oppose continuance of taxes. I shall stay at home quietly with Mrs. Quotem.

Love and health to all my new cousins, and particularly to Uncle M. Ever yours most truly, B.

Byron to Hobhouse

January 26th, 1815.

MY DEAR HOBHOUSE,—Your packet hath been perused, and firstly I am lost in wonder and obligation at your good nature in taking so much trouble with Spooney and my damnable concerns.

Newstead must be sold without delay, and even at

a loss; *out of debt* must be my first object, and the sooner the better.

As for expectations, don't talk to me of "expects" (as Mr. Lofty says to Croaker of "inspects,"[1] the Baronet is eternal, the Viscount immortal, and my lady (senior) without end. They grow more healthy every day, and I verily believe Sir Ralph and Lady Milbanke, and Lord Wentworth are at this moment cutting a fresh set of teeth; and unless they go off by the usual fever attendant on such children as don't use the "American Soothing Syrup," that they will live to have them all drawn again.

Ever, dear Hobhouse, thine, B.

Lady Melbourne to Byron

January 31st [Tuesday], 1815.

MY DEAR LORD B.,—I have been longing to write to you these 3 or 4 days, but have been incapable—a complaint which I used to be subject to, laid me upon my couch in a state of stupefaction. I have not had it for these last eight years, and had hoped it was one of y^e^ advantages of age to be free from irritation of nerves. You are all this time saying, "What is this?" Patience, and I'll tell as shortly as I can. It is a sort of nervous headache which affects your sight, and sometimes you see half a face, and sometimes two faces. I see you laugh! and I know it is both laughable and lamentable! the first to whoever hears the description, the last, to those who feel it. For when it goes off it terminates in a violent headache, and leaves you quite unhinged and unfit for y^e^ slightest exertion. But it is gone now, and I have said enough about it, in all conscience.

What a suspicious person for are! On some points you guess right, on others wrong. You say I write cautiously, and you mention having been married 3 weeks! If that is not y^e^ time to be cautious, I don't know what is. You were wrong about y^e^ letter in

[1] *The Good-natured Man*, by Oliver Goldsmith.

which I mentioned Lady Blar—. I had nothing particular to say, and wrote about her, as the news of y^e^ day; but I certainly did not write it to be seen. I never wish people to get into bad habits; I know, once begun, they are not easily broken. I must thank you for saying you forgive (what you are pleased to call) my doubts, and for not allowing my sincerity to prevent y^r^ still having confidence in me. I willingly accept the office in which you have installed me, and hope always to be your *corbeau blanc* (you remember Voltaire's tale). I wish you may hit as justly upon the *Corbeau Noir*, and avoid him.

And so, Lord Stafford[1] is gone over to Ministers for a Dukedom, and Erskine for a Green Ribbon! When a fool shows such a want of steadiness and principle I only laugh at him. But when a clever man like Erskine contradicts all his professions of so many years' standing, for the sake of a few dinners and a "painted string," I own that it puts me out of temper, and out of patience; and inclines me to indulge a bad opinion of all men. He is named the "Green Man," which was told to Sir S. Romilly, who said: "And now, in the House of Lords he'll be y^e^ *Green Man and still.*"[2] I hope you have not heard this before.

I have had a copy of Moore's lines sent me to-day, with which I am delighted ("Complaint of a Mistress to her Lover"); they have acquired great celebrity by its being known that you *wept* while they were being sung to you. Do you acknowledge the truth of this? Moore has had the greatest success at Chatsworth. All the ladies quite enthusiastic about his agreeableness. Emily writes me word: "We have lost some of our

[1] George Granville, Marquess of Stafford, whose daughter Byron was supposed to be about to marry, was not created Duke of Sutherland till 1833.

[2] Thomas Erskine, Lord Erskine, was the youngest son of tenth Earl of Buchan, created a Baron in 1806. He was called to the Bar in 1783, and was appointed Attorney-General to the Prince of Wales. In 1806 he became Lord Chancellor. On the death of Lord Lothian in 1815 he was invested with the order of the Thistle.

company, but still are gay. Alas! Moore left us yesterday."

Your former favourite, Lady Susan Ryder, has been there displaying all her graces to the master of the mansion, who does not seem inclined to grace her in return.[1] Seriously, they say the attack is quite *à la Worcester*, but will not succeed.

A few days past I received a letter from a lady with the following: "Wish me joy of Lord B.'s being really married, as I am saved a wonderful number of questions. Seriously, I am very glad of it for his sake, as matrimony appears to me y^e^ best chance of steadying his mind without weakening his genius." I thought this opinion singular enough to be worth copying. I can only say Amen—*ainsi soit il*—and it seems to be going on prosperously and wisely, whilst you proceed on y^e^ plan of allowing yourself to be directed by your wife. That is the way to be a good and contented husband. You know I agree with you when you say you are a very good-natured person. Everybody will find you so, if they abstain from plaguing you when you are not in *good spirits* (we'll *give it that* name), and if they do, they deserve to meet with rebuffs.

Write to me, *mon cher Neveu, et choisissez mieux votre temps*. I am inclined to think that gave some *ombrage*, but keep faith with me, and say nothing.

Remember that although you have no *Corbeau Noir*, actually *noir*, you may have one flying about, with *many* black feathers in her plumage.

I am sorry to find people have a bad opinion of Lord Portsmouth's case. Leach told George [Lamb] y^e^ other day, that he thought the Chancellor must grant an injunction; and Sir S. Romilly soon after said he could see no reason why he should. I certainly had rather depend upon the latter, than upon y^e^ former. But there is an idea that y^e^ case is a very strong one

[1] This refers to William, sixth Duke of Devonshire. Born 1790, succeeded to the Dukedom 1811. Lady Susan Ryder, daughter of the Earl of Harrowby, married in 1817 Lord Ebrington, who became Lord Fortescue. She died in 1827.

against him.[1] They tell me there is a very amusing book just published: *Mémoires sur la Guerre des Français en Espagne*, by M. Rocca. I am going to buy it. Shall I send it you? I believe it is the man who was *le bien aimé de* Mad^e^ de Staël (poor man!), and to whom, it is reported, she was married; but I do not believe that was true. Lady Ossulston writes word from Paris: "It is quite over with Mad^e^ de Staël, since her letter to Murat. Nobody can bear her; she thinks only of courting Ministers, but they will have nothing to say to her. They are wiser than ours. Did I ever tell you that most of them went to y^e^ Regent to desire him to go and pay her a visit; and gave, as a reason, that she had such a *powerful pen*, that it was of great consequence to make her speak well of this country! What a mean set they are! You will think there is no end to my pen. God bless you.

Most affectionately yours, E. M.

Byron to Lady Melbourne

SEAHAM, *February 2nd*, 1815.

MY DEAR AUNT,—*Sans* letter paper, I have co-opted awkwardly enough a sheet of foolscap whereupon to answer your epistle. I cannot "laugh" at anything which gave you pain, and therefore will say nothing about your nervous headache, except that I am glad that it is gone; one may see a "double face" without being *delirious* though; but I must cease talking of your complaint for fear of growing as sentimental as Bob Adair, your larmoyant admirer. Had you seen Lord Stair?[2] If so the disorder, as far as the *ache* (the face is too dull to be double) is accounted for.

[1] Lord Portsmouth married in 1814 the eldest daughter of Byron's solicitor, John Hanson. His brother, and next heir, took out a commission of lunacy, hoping to prove that Lord Portsmouth, at the time of his marriage, was insane. Byron was his "best man," and, when subsequently asked his opinion, said that he did not think Lord P. was more mad than others who enter upon matrimony. For full particulars see *Letters*, ii. 393, 394.

[2] John Dalrymple, sixth Earl of Stair (1749–1821), served in the first American War. Ambassador to Poland 1782, and to Berlin 1785; died, unmarried, in 1821.

It rejoices me to hear of Moore's success; he is an excellent companion as well as poet, though I cannot recollect that I "wept" at the song you mention. I ought to have done so; but whether I did or not, it is one of the most beautiful and touching compositions that ever he penned, and much better than ever was compounded by anyone else.[1]

The *moon* is over; but Bell and I are as lunatic as heretofore; she does as she likes, and don't bore me, and we may win the Dunmow flitch of bacon for anything I know. Mamma and Sir Ralph are also very good, but I wish the last would not speak his speech at the Durham meeting above once a week after its first delivery.[2]

I won't betray you, if you will only write me something worth betraying. I suppose your "C— noir" is ×, but if × were a raven, or a griffin, I must still take omens from her flight.

I can't help loving her, though I have quite enough at home to prevent me from loving anyone essentially for some time to come.

We have two visitors here, a Mrs. and Miss Somebody; the latter plain, and both humdrum, they have made me so sleepy that I must say Good night.

Ever yours most nepotically, B.

February 5th, 1815.

MY DEAR AUNT,—Pray is there any foundation for a rumour which has reached me—that *les agneaux*[3] are about to separate? If it is so, I hope that this time it is only on account of incompatibility of temper; and that no more serious scenes have occurred; in short, I don't know what to wish, but no harm to anybody, unless for the good of our family, which she is always embroiling. Pray tell me as much as your new code of confidence will permit, or, what is still better, that this report (which

[1] "When first I met thee."

[2] See letter to Moore of same date, *Letters and Journals*, iii. 176.

[3] William and Caroline.

came in a letter) is, as the person says it may be, a "wicked scandal."

I answered you a few days ago. We have three or four visitors here, whom I wish gone again, though very good people in their way; but also in my *way* too. I did not know of their approach till their arrival, but I thought the cursed best liveries of the servants, and some old, and ill-fashioned gold dessert-knives, etc., boded me no good, as omens of preparation; and so it has turned out.

Bell is very well, and looking so, but I have got a cold —it is going off however.

I have had a letter from Moore, very laudatory of Lady Cowper in particular, and the C[hatsworth] party in general.

Why did you call Lady S[usan] R[yder] *my* former "favourite?" I never exchanged a word with her in my life, after she came out, nor before, except at her mother's, and then because people seemed to treat her as a child, and not talk to her at all. I wish either she, or anyone else, would get hold of that foolish piece of nobility; the public have as much right to a Duchess of Devonshire, as to the repeal of the property tax, and ought to petition for both.

Ever yours most truly, B.

[Seaham] *February 6th*, 1815.

My dear Lady M^e^,—I write to you upon mourning paper, all my gilt (spell it with an *u* if you like) is gone; but it is really not malaprop, for last night was nearly *my* last, as thus.

Thanks to my father-in-law and your worshipful brother's collieries and coals, my dressing-room fire was so diabolically pregnant with charcoal, that I was taken almost to lady-like fainting, and if Bell had not in the nick of time postponed Old Nick for the present, and sluiced me with Eau de Cologne, and sorts of waters besides, you might now have been repairing your latest suit of black to look like new for your loving nephew. All this is true, upon the word of a man hardly resusci-

tated, and Bell herself has not been quite well since with her exertions—this is in favour of matrimony, for had I been single, the lack of aid would have left me suffocated; it was in bed that I was overwhelmed (though the charcoal was in the next, my dressing-room), and how her lungs withstood it, I can't tell; but so it is, she is alive, and, thanks to her, so am I.

Our guests are gone, and I am very anxious to hear from you—you owe me a letter if not two, for this makes my third to your *one*. News are none, except shipwrecks, and county meetings; the sea and the freeholders have been combustling about the east wind, and the property tax, and vessels have been lost, and speeches found in great plenty.

I am yawning hideously, because I can't hear your answer, instead of reading it, and this part of the night, the "sweet of it" (as Falstaff says) in London, is the drowsiest here. So good night.

Ever thine, B.

Lady Melbourne to Byron

February 8th, 1815.

DEAR LORD B.,—It may, or it may not, be "wicked scandal," but as far as I am informed—it is not true. They are in y^e^ country, to all appearance like two turtle Doves.[1] There may now and then be a little sharpness introduced—but who knows that some part of y^e^ cooing of these same Birds may not be scolding. Really, she seems inclined to behave better than she has done, and is only troublesome in private, and a great bore in Society. This I know you never *could* believe. But I hope some day to see you undergo a Dinner, when she wishes to show off. Is this confiding enough? You have no reason to complain of me either for y^e^ past, or present—the future depends upon yourself.— I yesterday, enclosed you a letter to Lady Byron. I could not answer yours while I was in her debt; but I really do not reckon how many I write to y^e^ one or to

[1] Wm. Lamb and Lady Caroline.

y^e^ other, of which you accused me. When I write to you it is as I talk to you, *à cœur ouvert*, when you are sitting on y^e^ couch opposite to me—and we soon laugh away an hour. I am laughing now at your "essentially."[1] Was that word ever made use of before in such a sense? I was so much amused at it that I looked for it in a little old dictionary that was lying on the table, and I found, to my great astonishment and yours too, I believe, the following: "Essentially . . . Essentiellement . . . par nature . . . par Essence." I had never heard of it before, but as essentially worse or better—or, serving anyone essentially, &c., &c. To me it was quite a new reading. . . . I did not mean that any favourite of yours was synonymous to that term when you talk of the Grand Signiors. But I have heard you say she was agreeable, and you thought her a nice girl. I have no objection to her, or any other person entrapping his Grace, but, like a good politician, I had rather he would form an alliance with some person hostile to y^e^ present System.

You wrong me about ——. On one subject they are as black, and as hideous as any Phantasm of a distempered brain can imagine. But, that *essential* out of the way, I do not know anyone more fitted for your *Corbeau blanc*, from cleverness, good-humour, and a thousand agreeable qualities—not forgetting the interest they take in you, and the knowledge they have of you, which renders them more able to manage and advise. Does this satisfy you? Does the end make up for the beginning? You know you gave me *liberté entière*; and, what is more, I make full use of the permission. I have written in a great hurry, and must finish. You will hear stories enough of all sorts—in gossiping letters from gossiping correspondents. Who are the visitors? How they must dislike you! Don't start; that must follow, of course, if you are not *prévenant* for them; for you have y^e^ power of being much otherwise when

[1] See letter of 2 Feb.

you please. I may as well ask if this letter pleases you better than my others ?

Yours affectionately, E. M.

P.S.—I am glad to hear so good an account of Annabella. You seem altogether mighty comfortable, which delights me. Do pray tell me if you stay on some time, as I want to know—no mere curiosity—but I want to send her a letter that will go direct to y^e^ place where she is.

WHITEHALL, *February 11th*, 1815.

DEAR LORD B.,—I hope you and Annabella soon recovered from y^e^ effects of your accident. It might have been very serious, and I am not surprised she was ill from the alarm she must have felt at your situation ; and that in consequence of it you were not quite recovered when she wrote. If the Coals have that sulphurous tendency, pray open your Window when you leave your dressing-room to go to bed. There are many persons who are affected by it. Foreigners particularly who are accustomed to Wood fires; sea-coal is much more impregnated with that sort of Vapour than other coal. Therefore, pray do not neglect to take measures to avoid any recurrence of so very unpleasant an event—as much for y^e^ sake of your friends as for yourself—and for my sake especially. I am heartily glad you were married, and hope you find reason to rejoice at it more and more every day. This has been a trial of Bell's presence of mind and adroitness, which I am delighted to hear she possesses, and that the result was so favourable. You have no right to complain of me as a Correspondent. I always like writing to you, and often when I have not, it has been from the fear of your thinking me a bore. That has not been y^e^ reason why you sometimes have been so long silent yourself. Perhaps y^e^ following Character of you, which is now given upon the Continent, may account for it better. In a letter to me, it is said : "There is a Lady here, a great friend of y^e^ *Giaour's* who says he is a mighty

uncertain Gentleman in his temper." "Who is this," you'll say? I guess, and I'll tell you. I think it is a Lady who might add: "When people standing upon the stairs show a disposition to caress *people* standing by them; and that, from decorum, those people go away—but soon return (in the hopes, probably, of a *rénouvellement*) but find the former disposition altered *essentially* in thought, act, and deed; have they not a right to say that Gentleman is uncertain, not to be depended upon, &c., &c., &c.? Should you not recollect to what I allude; or that numbers of similar occurrences puzzle you—think of the staircase at Mr. Pigou's, and I am very much mistaken if that is not y^e^ lady. . . . I must now finish, though it is a much shorter letter than I commonly write to you; but I have been pestered with Lady Visitors all the morning who have prevented my writing. I think London so much pleasanter when it is not full—that every new face I see makes me cross, that is, those I do not love, and for that reason I shall rejoice very much when I see yours and Bell's. I hope you mean to try me soon.

Ever affectionately yours, E. M.

Byron to Hobhouse

March 3rd, 1815.

My dear Hobhouse,—As I shall not perhaps set off so soon as I expected, you may address your responses here as usual.

What has happened between you and Lord J. T.[1] I hear he has "lampooned you and your friends," so says Kinnaird. I hope I am included in the number; but methinks that aged and venerable nobleman is meddling with irascible men—men famous with the pen, and tolerable in accuracy with the pistol. How comes he into such a hornet's nest? Must one fight? I am ready, either as

[1] Probably Rear-Admiral Lord John Townshend, who succeeded his cousin as 4th Marquess Townshend in 1855.

principal or second against him and his whole generation.

In my last I told you J[effre]y has accepted your composition. I hope you are pleased with what he says thereupon.[1]

I have not heard from Hanson, but have written to him in a style worthy of Salmasius. I have talked "professional negligence and personal disrespect," I have talked of "an end of all confidence," and still he answers nothing. "May he be damned, like the Glutton —a whoreson Achitophel."

I wish you would make an inquest of the house of the Duchess of Devonshire—now to be let—and which, if it suited, I should be glad to take for the year.[2]

I am very comfortable here, listening to that monologue of my father-in-law, which he is pleased to call conversation; he has lately played once on the fiddle, to my great refreshment.

We have had visitors, and they are gone; I have got K[innaird]'s receipt for the shell-fish, but no shell-fish for the receipt.

I hear Kean is coming to Sunderland, but probably not before my migration.[3]

Well, now I want for nothing but an heir to my estate, and an estate for my heir.

Ever yours most truly, B.

Byron to Lady Melbourne

April 22nd, 1815.

DEAR AUNT,—I have not seen the tragedy,[4] nor knew that Murray had it. If I had, you should have received it without delay. Was not you at the play on Thursday? I thought you were visible, but obscurely, in L[d] E.'s box.

[1] Jeffrey had accepted Hobhouse's Review of Leake's *Researches in Greece* for the *Edinburgh Review*.

[2] 13, Piccadilly Terrace.

[3] Edmund Kean (1787–1833).

[4] Probably Lady Dacre's *Ina*, which was produced at Drury Lane on 22 April and "damned." See *Letters and Journals*, iii. 195.

Bell has got a sad cold, but I hope will be better soon.

L[d] W.'s will is what was expected, but his property more considerable. The executors tell me that estates intailed on Lady M. and Bell, &c., are, or may be made, nearly £8,000 a year; and there is a good deal of personalty besides, and money, and God knows what, which will come in *half* to Lady Mil. now.

The Tamworths have the other half of the personals only. These consist of partly Lady W[entworth]'s fortune, and £20,000 in the 3 per cents.

There are separate estates left for sale; firstly, to pay all debts, and then to divide the residue between the two natural children.

I hope we shall meet soon.

Bell is pronounced in a certain way, but I fear the present state of her health will materially interfere with that prospect for the present.

I will, however, hope better.

Y[rs] very truly, B.

Lady Melbourne to Byron

February 5th, 1816.

Dear Lord B.,—There is a report about you, so much believed in Town, that I think you should be informed of it. They say you and Annabella are parted, and even state y[e] authority upon which it is founded. In general, when reports are as false as I know this to be, I think the best way is to despise them, and to take no measures to contradict them. But really, this is so much talked about and believed, notwithstanding my contradictions, that I think you ought to desire her to come to Town, or go to her yourself. I am still confined to the house, but y[e] first time I go out I will call upon Mrs. Leigh. I should like to see you then, and tell you several things which I do not like to write, and I cannot see you at home.

Yours ever, E. M.

February 14th, 1816.

DEAR LORD B.,—I omitted y^e^ other morning saying to you that if you wish to *see* me, or think I can be of any use, I will go to you at any time. I have received a letter from Lady Noel[1] saying that it is not honourable to give any information to any persons except those whom it is necessary to trust. If you have anything more favourable to tell me, perhaps you will write me a line; or, at all events, I will call upon Mrs. Leigh to-morrow or next day.

Yours most truly, E. M.

P.S. I have seen my brother,[2] who said he was then waiting for an answer from you, which Mr. Hanson was to bring him.

[1] Ci-devant Milbanke, Lady Byron's mother.
[2] Sir Ralph Noel, Lady Byron's father.

END OF VOL. I

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